



GERALD FRENCH'S FRIENDS

GEORGE H. JESSOP

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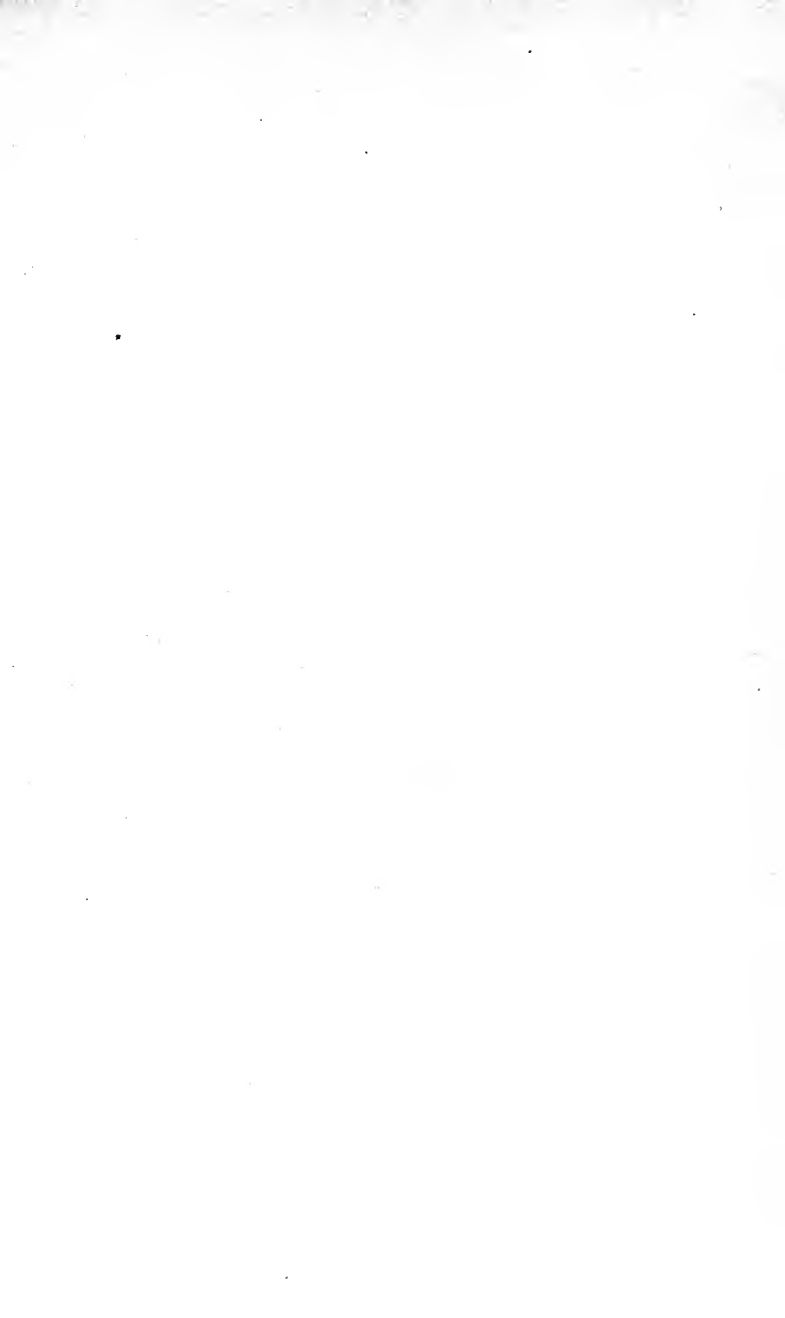
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GERALD FFRENCH'S
FRIENDS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

JUDGE LYNCH : A Romance of the California
Vineyards.

CHECK AND COUNTERCHECK : A Tale of
Twenty-five Hours.

(With Brander Matthews.)

GERALD FRENCH'S FRIENDS

BY
GEORGE H. JESSOP

DISCARDED

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PREFACE.

MR. GERALD FFRENCH'S journalistic career on the Pacific Coast covered a period of five years—from 1873 to 1878. In this time it was his fortune to meet a great many Irishmen, with several of whom he became more or less intimately associated. The Irish colony in California is important both in numbers and influence, and Mr. Ffrench's situation offered unusual advantages for a study of the more prominent peculiarities of the members of that colony. The purpose of these chapters is to depict a few of the most characteristic types of the native Celt of the original stock—as yet unmixed in blood, but modified by new surroundings and a different civilization. All the incidents related in this book are based on fact, and several of them are mere transcripts from actual life, with no more material alteration than seemed necessary to throw the veil of fiction over the identity of the characters.

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THE RISE AND FALL OF "THE
IRISH AIGLE."



THE RISE AND FALL OF "THE IRISH AIGLE."

MR. MARTIN DOYLE, Mr. Andrew Cummiskey, Mr. Peter O'Rourke, Mr. Frank Brady, and Mr. James Foley were seated in the private snuggerly behind Mr. Matthew McKeon's sample-room on Washington Street, San Francisco. It was late in the evening of Thanksgiving Day, 1874, and these gentlemen had met by appointment to discuss a very serious and important matter of business. The apartment was small and its atmosphere was changing into a pale blue haze. This was due to Mr. McKeon's cigars, one of which was wielded by each of the party. From the saloon outside muffled sounds of holiday revelry stole in, swelling into positive uproar when the host opened the door, which he did every ten or fifteen minutes, to put in his head to inquire if "the jintlemen wanted anything." To each of these appeals Mr. Martin Doyle made the same reply: "Nothin', Mat, noth-

in' ; we're here for business, not for dhrink." And the door was closed again.

The truth was that all five were patriots of the most advanced type, and had met to determine upon the best means of freeing old Ireland from the bloody and tyrannical yoke of the Saxon oppressor. It is true that "opprissor" was the word used in their frequent repetition of this formula, but the meaning was the same.

In spite of the periodical refusal of McKeon's offers of refreshment, the table round which they were seated was fairly furnished with drinkables ; perhaps this circumstance emboldened them to decline further supplies. Messrs. Cummiskey, Brady, O'Rourke, and Foley paid attention to a portly bottle of Kinahan's L L, the contents of which they qualified in varying proportions with hot water, lemon, and sugar. Mr. Doyle's tastes had become so vitiated by long residence in America as to lead him to prefer simple Bourbon whiskey ; but, this detail apart, he was as true an Irishman still as on the day, now some twenty-five years ago, when, a lank, ungainly boy, he had entered Tapscott's office in Liverpool and engaged passage for the land of promise. Indeed, it was Mr. Doyle who had called the present meeting together.

By ten o'clock the bottles were almost empty, and the cigar smoke had grown so dense that the mild features of Robert Emmet, who stood in all the glory of green uniform and waved a feathered hat exultantly from an engraving above Mr. Foley's head, could scarcely be distinguished. Mr. Martin Doyle's notable scheme had been thoroughly discussed in all its details, and the proud projector arose somewhat unsteadily.

"Fri'nds and fellow-countrymen," he began, "the death-knell of Saxon opprission has nearly sthruck. Ye can come in, Mat"—this to Mr. McKeon, whose head appeared in the doorway—"ye can come in; we've most finished, an' we'll be havin' a dock a dorrish prisintly. Well, as I was sayin', the Saxon opprissor——"

"To hell wid him!" broke in Foley, impulsively, and the rest of the company contributed a deep-voiced "Amin!"

"Misther Foley, and jintlemen," expostulated the speaker, "I have the flure. We're agreed, I belave, that the pin is mightier nor the sword. All in favor of that proposition will signify their assint by sayin' 'Aye.' Conthrary minded, 'No.' The ayes have it, and it is so orthered. Therefore, jintlemen, we bein' prisint here this night do agree each to con-

thribute the sum of wan hunthred dollars, bein' five hunthred dollars in all, to defray the immejit expinses of startin' a wakely journal, the same to be called 'The Irish Aigle.'"

Enthusiastic cheers drowned the speaker's voice. He smiled, answered a pantomimic suggestion of McKeon's with a nod, and, draining the glass which the host handed to him, proceeded.

"We five jintlemen here prisint, havin' the cause of an oppressed people at heart, do hereby resolve ourselves into a thryumvirate to solicit further conthributions from local pathriots, an' such aid in the way of advertisements an' subscriptions as we may be able to secure. All in favor of this plan will signify the same by sayin' 'Aye.' Conthrary minded, 'No.' The ayes have it, and it is so urthered. Mr. Foley, Mr. O'Rourke, Mr. Brady, Mr. Cummiskey, and me unworthy silf, as members of the Thryumvirate, will git to work. Long life and success to 'The Irish Aigle!'"

As soon as the toast had been duly honored, Mr. Cummiskey took McKeon aside and pointed out to him the immense advantage he would reap from advertising his saloon in the new organ. The representation which appeared to have the most weight with the liquor dealer lay in these words:

"Ye see, Mike, the offices of 'The Aigle' will be only three dures from you and sivin from Jerry McManus. Now, ye know yersilf pathriotism is dhry work, and McManus knows it too."

On the strength of this argument the astute Mr. Cummiskey booked a ten-dollar "ad" on the spot, and laid the foundation of that generous rivalry between the two saloon keepers which afterward became such an important factor in the well-being of "The Irish Eagle."

The preliminary work of engaging a suitable office and hiring type was undertaken by Mr. Doyle, and was executed, as the legend in his own shoe-store set forth, "with promptness and despatch." Two weeks afterward the first number of the new paper was for sale on the news-stands, glorious with a rampant eagle flaunting a Celtic motto from its beak. The reading matter was largely made up of patriotic poems and clippings from other journals of the same way of thinking, but the editorial page was original—thoroughly, unquestionably original. The united wisdom of the Thryumvirate had been expended on that effort. There breathed the fiery utterances of Cummiskey, the butter-seller; there sparkled the neat epigram of O'Rourke, the truckman; there were set forth the lucid arguments of

Foley, the tanner ; there the reader might trace the sportive fancies of Brady, the bookbinder ; and the whole bore witness to the massive genius of Martin Doyle, the shoemaker. It was a great number, and its appearance was duly celebrated at McKeon's by the Thryumvirate, resolved for the moment into a mutual admiration society.

At this meeting a new arrangement was made. The paper should be edited, not by the whole committee acting as a body, but by the individual members holding office in rotation. The five issues succeeding the first came out in this way, and lost nothing in originality even if they suffered in variety. Peter O'Rourke began the series and Frank Brady brought up the rear. Each recurrent editor was thoroughly satisfied with himself, but felt hurt to see the line of policy he had projected during his week of office ruthlessly abandoned by his successor. It became evident that something must be done in the interests of uniformity. The paper was pulling five ways at once, and, doubtless for that reason, had so far failed to deal any really fatal blow at British institutions. Everyone felt this, and the eyes of the nation were upon Mr. Martin Doyle. That gentleman rose to the occasion, and called an extraordinary meeting of the Committee

of Stockholders. The enterprise had been duly incorporated according to the laws of California, under the name of "The Eagle Publishing Company." The session took place in McKeon's saloon, and Mr. Doyle laid the matter before his colleagues in a neat impromptu speech.

"Ireland," he remarked, "has groaned for six hunthred years beneath the yoke of the Saxon oppressor." Mr. Doyle's oratory had the merit of taking up his subject at the very beginning. Having briefly called attention to the principal groans which had been uttered by the suffering island during the centuries referred to, the speaker proceeded.

"At a pravius meetin' of this honorable body it was determined that the best and most immejitly practical way of rightin' the wrongs of our suffering counthry was to dissiminate them broadly through the world ; to call on all Irishmen in ivery climate under heaven to organize an' be free, an' to paint the black behavior of the Saxon tyrant in the brightest colors. Wid this object we started 'The Irish Aigle,' the first couple of numbers of which have already reached England and sthruck terror to the sowl's of a bloody and sowlless aristocracy. But, jintlemen, we cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that no tanjible result has yet been per-

juiced, and this I attribute to the followin' rason, namely, to wit: while we are all alike annymated by the same burnin' love of freedom, we differ in matters of daytail. While wan advycates the sword, another is of opinyun that an open risin' would at prisint be primature. We all belave in organization, but no two of us has the wan notion as to the manes and maning of organization. Therefore the paper sez wan wake wan thing, and another wake another, which is confusin' to the ignorant pathriot; an' that many of our best pathriots is ignorant, it is not you, me fri'nds, nor me will deny. The ignorance of the masses is another crime on the bloody bade-roll of Saxon opprission. Therefore, jintlemen, what I propose is as follows, namely, to wit: that we do ingage a jintleman of scientific attainments an' practised lithery vocations, to idit this journal an' say for us what we have to say betther nor we can say it for ourselves, an' such a jintleman I have been fortunate enough to discover an' unearth. He is an Irishman, av coorse; a native of the county Westmeath, an', what is more to our purpose, a graduate of Thrinity College, Dublin. He is young, but sure Robert Emmet was young, an' he'll come all the ch'aper on that account; an' he is racently from the ould

counthry, an' therefore posted in all the latest day-tails of its sufferin's. His name is Ffrench, wherefore we may assume that he is a near relative of the immortal liberathor, Daniel O'Connell. Now, jintlemin, we can arrange the business part later; all I want to do now is to take the sinse of this Thryumvirate in the ingagin' of an iditor for 'The Irish Aigle.' All in favor of that proposition will signify the same by sayin' 'Aye.' Conthrary minded, 'No.' The ayes have it, an' it is so orthered."

There could be no doubt as to the approval with which this speech was received. "A great idea intirely," "Couldn't be betther," "A sthroke of jan-ius," were a few of the phrases in which the Thryumvirate endorsed the proposal of its spokesman. Mr. Doyle, with a brief "Ye'll excuse me, jintlemin," and a modest consciousness of having deserved well of his country, withdrew.

"Ye done grand work wid your issue of the paper, Andy," remarked Mr. Foley; "it was raally great."

"I thought it wasn't bad, Jim, till I seen yours," responded Mr. Cummiskey, "an' thin I seen what a man of native originality c'u'd do wid the subject;" and so, like hand and glove patriots as they were, each proceeded to exalt his neighbor and complacently to drink in such dews of applause as de-

scended on himself, till Mr. Doyle returned and introduced Gerald Ffrench.

"Mr. Ffrench, jintlemen," he said ; "a man of rare scientific attainments and university eddication." All rose, and one after another grasped Mr. Ffrench's hand. This operation was conducted silently, and reminded Gerald of a chorus of conspirators in opera-bouffe. As Mr. Foley, the last to advance, dropped the young man's fingers, he remarked in a husky whisper, and with a suggestion of emotion in his voice :

"This is a great day for Ireland."

"Ye're right, it is," said Mr. O'Rourke. Then he stepped to the door and called : "Mountain dew, Mat, and bug juice for Mr. Doyle. Ye can drink the ould stuff ?" he added, turning to Gerald. Gerald admitted that he could, and then the conversation languished. All resumed their seats, and the ten eyes of the Thryumvirate were levelled at the young man. He bore the scrutiny uneasily, and his color rose. They were "taking stock" of him.

Gerald Ffrench was about twenty-three, and a fair specimen of a class of young men of which the Silent Sister turns out several hundred every year. At this time he had been in America some eight months ; in San Francisco less than two. He came

of a good old Irish family, and had received the younger son's portion of two thousand pounds immediately after his twenty-first birthday. He had read a little for the bar, and did not like it; he had thought of entering the army, but did not quite fancy it; on the whole, it occurred to him that he could not do better than to try his fortune in the United States. He left Ireland for New York, but did not travel direct. He first visited London, and thence passed over to Paris. He found the latter city very fascinating, and remained there some time. Then, as it was so close at hand, he thought it a pity not to see the Vienna Exhibition, and he went to Vienna and saw it. The young fellow, accustomed to deny himself nothing, and with more money in his pocket than he had ever possessed before, did not exercise a becoming frugality. When he had had enough of Europe he sailed for America, and New York was scarcely less to his taste than the Old World capitals. He lingered there for several months, but finding himself unappreciated, he started for California. He selected the route by Panama, and treated the voyage over tropic seas as a veritable pleasure trip. In San Francisco he remained, possibly because he had not money enough left to go farther. It was not till he had changed

his last twenty-dollar piece, however, that he realized his position. He had received all he was entitled to and had spent it. That twenty dollars, represented by a fast-diminishing pile of silver, must be replaced by his own exertions. For what was he fitted, this young man endowed with nothing but health, a good education, and a certain amount of superficial experience? He did not know. He wandered about the streets and envied the blacksmiths and the bricklayers. He would willingly have bartered his education for a good trade. Then he began to write for the papers, but speedily found that the qualifications which had won him an occasional medal for composition at Trinity College were of no value at all in the city department of a newspaper. Again and again were his contributions rejected with the curt remark, "We've no room to print essays." He offered to write editorials, but was laughed at, though he felt he could have amended the halting English of many of those oracular utterances. His rounds of the journals entailed much wear of heart and of shoe-leather, and but little silver solace. Still he made a few acquaintances, and it was one of these, an Irishman, and the city editor of an evening paper, who introduced him to Doyle as the very man for "The Irish Eagle."

Gerald had jumped at the idea eagerly, and had succeeded in impressing Mr. Doyle with a due sense of his attainments. His eyes sank before those of the Thryumvirate, however. A single question from any one of those shrewd-looking, middle-aged Irishmen might prick the bubble and display him in his true colors—as a man who knew no more of the routine work necessary for a paper than he did of casting its type. He might have reassured himself. Not one was there who did not regard him as an incarnate battering-ram, built expressly to level the battlemented tyranny of England in the dust.

McKeon entered with the refreshments. "Will ye oblige us wid the last number of 'The Irish Aigle?'" said Mr. Doyle, solemnly. Mr. Cumiskey on the right, Mr. Foley on the left, Mr. O'Rourke in front, and Mr. Brady from the rear, simultaneously proffered one to their chairman.

Gerald, who had been led to study the paper by the first hint of the honor in store for him, saw this and hurriedly restored his own copy to his pocket. The action, however, had not passed unnoticed, and called forth an approving smile from the Thryumvirate. Mr. Doyle took a paper from the man nearest him, and waved it in the air. He was evidently loaded and primed for a speech.

"By the unanimous vote of mesilf an' colleagues," he began, "you, Mr. Ffrench, are called to the iditorial chair of this journal. The stipind will be siventeen dollars and a half a wake." He paused to let his words have their due effect. Gerald leaned back with a sigh of relief. It would go hard but he could retain his position for one week at least, and \$17.50 looked to him like boundless wealth. The Thryumvirate was watching him. He felt that he was called on to say something.

"Very liberal, most happy," he muttered; and then, as no one spoke and the silence became embarrassing, he ventured to add, "By the bye—'Irish Eagle,' you know. Isn't it rather an odd name?"

"Why?" asked Mr. Doyle, severely; and Mr. Brady, who had not suggested it, hastened to add: "Maybe Mr. Ffrench could think of a betther?"

Thus appealed to, Mr. Ffrench, after some hesitation, thought that a more personal name—something like the "Fenian," or the— He was interrupted by a very tempest of opposition, and sat appalled at the fury of the storm he had called forth.

"Fenian!" "The dhirty rats!" "The cowardly time-servers!" "They're the curse of Ireland!" Such were the exclamations that broke from the

group ; but presently Mr. Doyle's voice rose in connected statement, dominating the confusion.

"Misther Ffrench," he said, "I'd have ye to know that this organization is thorough. We are no advycates of half-measures, and we propose to free Ireland, if we have to swim in blood to do it. We are advanced Nationalists ; we're far beyant the Fenians ! We say, 'Burn London,' 'Burn Liverpool,' 'Import cholera germs into Dublin Castle !' 'Blow up Windsor Castle !' 'Put to the sword the Houses of Parleymint'—ay, Irish mimbers and all, for they're no betther nor the rest, keepin' terms wid the bloody Saxon opprissor. An' if an army of thim half-hearted Fenians was in it, I'd say blow thim up too ; for they're no use, an' they're only palterin' wid the liberty of their counthry. The day of Vinegar Hill is over. It's not in the open field we'll honor thim by burnin' powdther, but undher their houses, undher their bridges, undher their public buildin's, an' that's the mission of 'The Irish Aigle.'"

Gerald's astonishment that any class of Irishmen should be, as Mr. Doyle phrased it, more "advanced" than the Fenians, was swallowed up in amazement at this vigorous denunciation. Like most young Irishmen of family and education he

had no sympathy whatever with the discontent of the peasantry, and, indeed, he had only vaguely heard of its existence before he came to America. There, however, he had soon found, to his surprise, that from the mere fact of his being an Irishman, it was accepted as inevitable that he must hate England and everything English. To the brother of the Conservative member, Edward French of Ballyvore Park, all this had seemed absurd enough, but he had let it pass without comment. Now he found himself the central figure of a knot of men who talked bloodshed, and savored the word as they uttered it as though it were pleasant of taste—men who condemned war and battle-fields as not • murderous enough, and who scouted as insufficiently villainous the most reckless organization he had ever heard of. However, brief as had been his newspaper experience, he had learned that in journalism it is not seldom necessary to support one side openly while secretly holding the opposite tenets. This he had come quite prepared to do, and this explosion, murder, and sudden death horrified him for a moment, till the very extravagance of the language brought its own comfort. It was something to laugh at, not to revolt from, this little group of Irishmen proposing to wreck Great Britain from

the back-room of a San Francisco saloon ; and then there was the \$17.50 to think of. He could not afford the luxury of high principles. He would humor the joke, and write an article on blowing up the Thames, if they wanted it. It would put money in his pocket and would not affect the Thames.

"With regard to the title of this journal," proceeded Doyle, waving the sheet, "it was silicted by me wid the approval of me colleagues here for the followin' raisons, namely, to wit: In the first place, the aigle is the emblem of America; for we are all American citizens, an' the counthry of our adoption is sicond in our affections only to that of our birth. In the nixt place, the aigle is universally regarded as the burrud of freedom: I niver seen wan free meself, nor any other way than in a cage at Woodward's Garden beyant, but it is so rigarded. This is 'The Irish Aigle;' high may she soar, an' long may she wave, an' deep be her talents in the black heart of the Saxon opprissor!"

As soon as the wild applause which this sentiment evoked had subsided, Mr. O'Rourke rose. "I propose," said he, "that we do now adjourn to the office, and install Mr. Ffrench in the iditorial chair, afther havin' inthrojuiced him to our foreman. All

in favor of this proposition will signify the same by——”

But as all rose at once, it was not considered necessary to press the question to a vote.

The editorial offices of “The Irish Eagle” occupied a single room at the top of a neighboring building. The apartment was divided into two unequal portions by a board partition which did not reach to the ceiling. In the outer room was the “plant” of the paper, consisting of a few cases of type, a roller for “pulling proofs,” and half a dozen galleys. There was an imposing-stone in the centre on which lay the forms just as they had come back from the printer. A shaky old man was distributing type at one of the cases. To him Gerald was duly presented. “Mr. Ffrench, this is our foreman, Mr. Mike Carney. Mike, this is the new iditor. Come inside now, an’ take charge;” and the whole party trooped into the sanctum.

It was a small place, and seemed crowded when all had entered. The furniture was scanty, consisting of a large table, a few office stools, and an arrangement of shelves against the partition for the accommodation of the unsold copies of the paper. The table was littered with exchanges, and a volume of the poems of Thomas Davis lay on the floor.

Mr. Doyle at once proceeded to business. "The paper goes to priss Fridays," he said; "so ye see, this bein' Monday, ye have no time to lose. How are ye off for copy, Mike?"

"Bad," answered the old printer. "I've a little reprint, but no original matter at all."

"We'll soon remedy that," said Gerald, cheerfully, with all the ready complaisance of a new hand. "How many editorials do you generally have?"

"The more the merrier," said Mr. Cummiskey. "Now, here's a good subject—'The Duty of the Day.' I started it mesilf." Gerald took a slip of manuscript from his hand. It was written in pencil, and showed many corrections and interlineations. It was not easy to read, but the new editor was in no position to neglect a hint.

"Since MacMurragh flourished and died a traitor's death," so Mr. Cummiskey's contribution began, "there has been only the one duty for Irishmen, and that is vengeance." Gerald paused in thought. Who was MacMurragh, when had he flourished, and for what had he been hanged? He wished that his new employers would not deal so much with obscure history. He ventured an observation.

"Undoubtedly the judicial murder of the unfortu-

nate MacMurragh calls for exemplary vengeance," he began. A howl of execration interrupted him. "The vilyan! The thraitor! The bloody agint of Saxon opprission!" Evidently he was on the wrong track, and MacMurragh was anything but popular. Gerald read the paragraph again, but it furnished no new light. "Let me see," he said, tentatively; "what was the exact date of MacMurragh's—ah—ahem—death?"

"Elivin hundhred an' sivinty-sivin," shouted the Thryumvirate as one man. Evidently MacMurragh belonged to a familiar historical epoch. Gerald swallowed his surprise and merely remarked, "Ah, yes; I had a dispute with Professor Galbraith once on that very point. He maintained that it was 1188, but I knew I was right."

"Av coorse ye were," said Cummiskey, triumphantly. "Sivinty-sivin, an' I'll maintain it agin the wurruld."

"But," ventured Gerald, "as your article is on the duty of the day, don't you think we are going back rather far for an illustration?"

"Who the divil wants an illusthration? It's an apoch: since Dermot MacMurragh—bad cess to him for that same—invited the English into Ireland, the counthry has nivir been quit of them. Our duty

began that day, an' it hasn't changed since. It's to kill ivery Englishman."

"But to do that we must organize!" broke in Foley, springing on his favorite hobby at a bound; "organize an' be free! That's the lesson to tach Irishmen to-day. Make yer first article on organization, Mr. Ffrench."

"With pleasure," said Gerald. "Do you advocate any particular plan of organization?"

"Niver heed the plan. Jist organize. Whin Irishmen the wurruld over are wilded into a solid newclayus, thin the death-knell of Saxon opprision will be flashed abroad visible as the firmymint. Thim's the very wurruds I stated in me own iditorial on thè subject."

"And a noble sintiment it is," said Mr. Doyle.

"Nobly expressed," added Gerald, with a bow to Mr. Foley, thereby making that gentleman a friend for life.

"Without wishin' to dictate to ye, Mr. Ffrench," remarked Doyle, after a brief pause, "I'll ax if ye know anything about dynamite."

"I know it is a very powerful explosive," said Gerald, somewhat surprised, "and that it bids fair to take the place of all other preparations of nitroglycerine; but why?"

“Why?” repeated Mr. Doyle, in a deep voice. “Because what Ireland needs is a powerful explosive; what England will get is a powerful explosive; that’s the why, an’ the chief mission of ‘The Irish Aigle’ is to bear powerful explosives to the sufferin’ children of Erin, whether they cower beneath the glassears of the North or hide their woes under the thropics. Come, jintlemin, that’s all that’s to be said. We won’t waste Mr. Ffrench’s time any longer. If ye want any information as to daytails, Mike Carney’s the boy to give ’em ye. Good day to ye, sir.” And the Thryumvirate filed out, leaving Gerald to collect such meaning as he might from the suggestions offered, and to condense them into an article which should teach the Irish race that the duty of the day was to organize dynamite.

As time wore on, Gerald found himself face to face with a difficult task. Having entered upon his duties with a tacit assumption of qualification, he felt obliged to live up to the character he had brought with him. This prevented him from asking questions, at least directly, and he was constantly on the watch to pick up any unconsidered crumbs of knowledge that might fall in his way. Being engaged as an expert, he could not learn as an apprentice, and yet the trivial details of even such an

office as that of "The Irish Eagle" were all new to him. Mike Carney quickly fathomed his ignorance ; but the old printer was good-natured, and not only kept the young man's secret, but made an elaborate pretence of belief in him. This, of course, did not impose on Gerald, who reciprocated by always observing the fiction of Carney's sobriety, and the two got on very well together. The editor learned something every day. He soon came to distinguish between brevier and nonpareil, and he corrected his proofs without marking errors in the middle of the line as they happened to occur. The Thryumvirate never suspected that an editor was being educated in the office, and the tangible results, as shown in the paper, were on the whole satisfactory. Gerald always wrote at least three articles—one on organization, one on the manifest duty of Irishmen, and one on the theory and practice of dynamite. These essays—for they were nothing less—abounded in long words and involved sentences, and in so far as they were incomprehensible to the patriots gave eminent satisfaction. There could be no doubt of the new editor's ability and scholarly attainments. But Doyle, who had all his life been accustomed to call a spade a spade, and an Englishman a bloody, brutalized robber, detected a certain weakness in the

academic phrases of the young collegian. "Our hereditary enemies," "the despoilers of our land," etc., were to the Irishman far less direct and forcible than "spawn of the Saxon traitor," or "red and pitiless monster," and Gerald's incapacity to realize the fact that an Englishman of moral life or good intentions is as much a creature of fancy as the unicorn, was at first rather trying to the patriot. "But he's young," Doyle would remark by way of consolation, "and he hasn't been ground under the heel of the Saxon for over forty years as I have ;" which, as the speaker had been a resident in the United States for a quarter of a century or thereabout, was quite likely to be the truth.

But, all in all, Gerald suited them very well. His editorial utterances took on more of the tone of his surroundings, and while still marshalling his verbal three-deckers for weekly action, he contrived now and then to throw a hot shot into the enemy's stronghold which delighted Doyle himself. As for Foley, he had sworn by the young man from the first, and committed to memory long passages from the paper and recited them as opportunity offered, either in the bosom of his family or in McKeon's saloon. Gerald soon began to enter with spirit into the game of vilifying the Saxon. His common-

sense told him that no harm could result from the frothy nonsense, and he even took a mischievous pleasure in sending his brother a copy of the paper each week. These, however, were addressed by the boy who wrote the wrappers. He would not have identified himself with the sheet for twice his weekly salary.

This same salary was the principal thorn in young Ffrench's bed of roses. It was never paid. He received money, to be sure, when his necessities urged him to press for it; but it was five dollars at one time, two at another—sometimes only fifty cents. "When the paper gets upon its legs"—that was the only answer he received when he asked for a settlement. There was no regular paymaster. A request addressed to Mr. Doyle, who seemed the moving spirit, would call forth some such answer as, "Money? Av coorse; why not? Can ye get along wid three dollars till to-morrow?" But to-morrow, in the sense that Gerald looked for it, never came, and the Eagle Publishing Company sank deeper and deeper into his debt.

Indeed, the paper was not prosperous. Subscriptions fell into arrears; advertisers did not pay up. McManus withdrew the card of his saloon altogether, on the ground that McKeon received all

the office patronage. Carney was forthwith provided with a dollar and instructed to go out and invest it over McManus's bar. This he did with scrupulous exactitude, but without result, unless his incapacity for work during the remainder of the day can be regarded as such. The change of whiskey didn't agree with him, he said. The following week McKeon reduced his advertisement. "As long as McManus don't put his card in the paper," argued McKeon, "there's no sinse in my carryin' such a big 'ad.'" Truly the "Eagle" had fallen on evil days.

The fact was that, though all five of the original promoters were enthusiastic in their self-sought mission, they had not calculated upon, nor could they afford, the constant drain which the paper made upon them. The office rent had to be paid; also the paper bill, and the weekly account for press-work. Gerald and Carney were less imperative items in the expense account, and they had to wait accordingly. The latter was not exacting: as long as he had a few "bits" to spend for liquor he seemed satisfied, and Gerald was at least making a living, such as it was, which was more than he had been able to do before. His receipts may have averaged eight dollars a week, and he paid the bal-

ance willingly as the price of experience, confessing to himself that he was only an apprentice.

An appeal to the wealthy Irishmen of the State, drawn up by Gerald and signed by the Thryumvirate, did not meet with conspicuous success. There were few responses. Mr. Patrick Byrne, the millionaire vine-grower of San Antonio County, sent a full-page advertisement of his "Golden Wine" marked for one insertion, and enclosed his check for two hundred and fifty dollars. But this afforded only a momentary respite. The paper bill took most of it; Gerald and Carney got ten dollars apiece. Evidently things could not go on in this way. "The Irish Eagle" was falling after a brief flight of some six months; it was slowly starving to death, and the first pound of dynamite was still unbought—the lowest step of Queen Victoria's throne was still unshattered.

The end was not long deferred. Gerald had just finished a handsome obituary notice of Mr. Phelim O'Gorman, a wealthy and prominent Irish resident who had died the day before, and Mike Carney was engaged in embalming the virtues of the deceased in cold type, when the Thryumvirate filed slowly into the editorial sanctum. There was gloom on the brows of the patriots, and sorrow in their tones.

Mr. Martin Doyle flung a small sheaf of advertising bills on the table. "I can't collect the first cint," he said, with a groan. The groan was echoed by his colleagues, and the editor looked serious and sympathetic. He felt that this was not a moment to urge the question of his arrears, though during the last few weeks the sum had rolled up with startling rapidity.

"They wouldn't organize," remarked Mr. Foley, despondently. "They might have been free by this time if they'd only have organized."

"They've niglected the clare duty of the day," said Mr. Cummiskey; "an' this is what it's brought us to."

Mr. Doyle cleared his throat and rose, but evidently he did not feel equal to a rhetorical flight. He only said :

"At a meetin' of the stockholders of the Aigle Publishing Company, duly called an' convaned, it has been decided to discontinue the publication of 'The Irish Aigle' for the prisint."

The announcement did not take Gerald wholly by surprise. He had been looking for something of the sort.

"And what about me?" he asked.

"This issue will be printed an' published as

usual," said Mr. Doyle. "It's all med up, anyhow, an' goes to priss to-night. Afther that, Mr. Ffrench, the company will have no further call for yer services."

"You owe me, as I suppose you are aware," began Gerald, but a storm of indignant protests drowned his voice.

"Bad cess to the dhirty money!" "Is it yer arrairs ye're thinkin' of whin the last hope of Irish indipindance is shattered in the dust?" "Aren't we all losers together?" and much more to the same effect. Gerald waited till silence was restored, and then attempted to renew his appeal, but Mr. Doyle turned on him with oppressive dignity.

"Ye're an Irishman, Mr. Ffrench, I belave?"

Gerald admitted his nationality.

"Very well, thin; it's proud an' thankful ye ought to be to make a thriflin' sacrifice for the land of yer burruth." In moments of excitement or emotion Mr. Doyle's native Doric took on a richer tone. "We've all med our sacrifices for the good cause. Let this wan be yours."

It was impossible for Gerald to explain to these perfervid patriots that their cause was not his—that all his sympathies, all his habits, bound him to the class they were aiming to overthrow. Out of his

own mouth, or rather out of his own editorials, they would have convicted him as something more advanced than a Fenian ; weak, indeed, in details of Irish history, but sound to the core on the great question of Irish liberty. As he sat silent, vainly seeking some reply to this appeal to his patriotism, the Thryumvirate rose as one man and stalked from the room.

From the case outside Mike Carney could be heard in a flood of song :

Oh, how she swum the wathers,
The good ship Castletown,
The day she flung our banner forth,
The Harp without the Crown.

The old printer was occasionally patriotic in his cups. Gerald likened "The Irish Eagle" to the dying swan, and realized that the end was near.

The following week was one of anxious inaction. Ffrench vibrated between the office and McKeon's saloon ; Carney confined himself strictly to the latter. The Thryumvirate was seldom visible, and had it not been for a lucky accident, the editor of "The Irish Eagle" would have left that paper penniless. A son of the late Mr. Phelim O'Gorman, pleased with the prominence given to his

father's virtues, and ignorant of the suspension of the paper, entered the office one day and found Gerald seated, like Marius, alone among the ruins. The greater part of the edition was still unsold on the shelves, and when Mr. O'Gorman, Jr., asked for a few copies of the issue containing the notice of his father's death, the editor was prompt to accommodate him. How many would he have?

"How many can you spare me?"

"All you want," answered Gerald, briskly; and young O'Gorman purchased two hundred "Irish Eagles" at their regular retail price of ten cents apiece, and departed, leaving Gerald with a glow of gratitude in his heart and a twenty-dollar piece in his pocket. He gave the defunct publishing company credit for this amount in his account for arrears.

So fell "The Irish Eagle."

Gerald French turned his back on Washington Street and patriotism, and took himself, his talents, and his new experience to more sordid and business-like journals. He began to meet with more success. He had learned habits of thrift and industrious routine, and he had imbibed a hearty hatred for Irish Nationalists and all their ways. This last fact, however, was long unsuspected by Foley, Cummis-

key, and the others. Mr. Martin Doyle, in particular, followed the career of the dethroned editor with deep interest, and considered him the shining light of the San Francisco press. He used to point out Gerald with pride as one who "had worked hard and med his sacrifices for the cause." He even invited the young man to attend a banquet of the Red Branch Knights on St. Patrick's day. This invitation was declined, Gerald keenly recalling that immortal anniversary the year before, and his mortification when the Thryumvirate had insisted on having "The Irish Aigle" printed in green ink in honor of the day. But that was all over now. Mr. Ffrench had resumed his ancestral rôle as a "Saxon opprissor," though the scattered members of the Thryumvirate were slow to believe it.

Conviction came on them at last, and with crushing force. A certain noble earl was murdered in Ireland under circumstances of peculiar barbarity. The victim was an old man, but he was also a large land-owner, and a howl of exultation at his death and execration of his memory went up from all the Irish societies. An important election was at hand, and the city papers, willing to cater to the Irish vote, took up the cry. The murdered earl was

branded as a tyrant, tales of harrowing evictions were invented and ascribed to him, and it was broadly hinted that he had received no more than his deserts. This was more than Gerald Ffrench could stand. He had known the old gentleman in former days, had dined at his table, and been "tipped" by him as a school-boy. He sat down and wrote a letter to "*The Golden Fleece*," a weekly paper of wide circulation. He took the earl's murder for a text, and told all he knew of the "wild justice of revenge" as executed by a blunderbuss from behind a hedge. His heart guided his pen; he rang out a withering impeachment of the methods of his countrymen, and signed it with his full name.

Mr. Martin Doyle, Mr. Andrew Cumiskey, Mr. Peter O'Rourke, Mr. Frank Brady, and Mr. James Foley met the same evening in the private snugery behind Mr. Matthew McKeon's sample-room on Washington Street. Mr. Doyle had a paper in his hand.

"Have ye read it?" he asked.

All admitted that they had.

Mr. Doyle arose. "Fri'nds an' fellow-counthry-min," he said, "this letther, difindin' the mimory of a black-hearted landlord; this letther, callin' the

noblest attribute of our common humanity, the attribute of rivinge, a crime, was written by Gerald Ffrench (groans). Is he an Irishman? ('No, no.') I don't care a trauneen if he was born in Westmeath; I don't value it a kippeen if he was eddicated in Thrinity College; it's nothin' to me if he did idit 'The Irish Aigle' for filthy lukker; I here and now do brand and stiggatize him as a vile spawn of the Saxon opprissor. All in favor thereof will signify the same by saying 'Aye.' Conthrary-minded, 'No.' The ayes have it, and it is so orthered."

All recorded their votes of censure against Gerald, even Mr. Foley, who acquiesced with a shake of the head, adding, "But he had grand ideas intirely about organization." Mr. Cummiskey took the suffrages of the party on the advisability of waylaying the culprit some night and giving him "the bating he had deserved," but this was overruled by Mr. Doyle. "It's no use, boys," he said; "a diginerate Irishman like that wud think nothin' of app'aling to the police for purtection. L'ave him alone. Vingeance will overtake him, along wid the rest of the accursed Saxon brood."

A DISSOLVING VIEW OF CARRICK
MEAGHER.

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I.

PHILOSOPHERS tell us that life is a circle, but it is not often a circle that rounds and completes itself within the observation of a single spectator. The mighty curve stretches forward and backward, but even in the case of our nearest friends it is but a limited zone that falls under our notice.

Many a man, whose taste has led him to observe the varied figures that troop across his path, has been struck with some particular face; has watched it as it lingered; has recalled it as it vanished, and has turned back to the big magic-lantern show amid which we live with the feeling that here was an individuality worthy to be fixed in less fleeting colors. But he cannot fix it. The romancer may shape and pursue through a world of selected adventures the being he has created; but the observer

of nature must be content with the brief glimpse afforded him, as his specimen is carried across a microscopic field of vision. And yet this fellow-mortal, of whom we know so little, may be the hero of an epic, but in our hearing that epic will never be sung. He may be the genius who is destined to shake the world, but he has passed beyond our ken ere he puts his hand to the lever. We all have had peeps at possible prodigies, but before anything had occurred to justify our expectation the slide was withdrawn from the magic-lantern and the scene changed.

It was in San Francisco, many years ago. Then Big Bonanza shares went begging at twelve dollars apiece; since then they have commanded thousands; now they are back at tens again. Poor men have become rich, rich men have become poor, and many who were the briskest have stepped aside out of the ranks. Fifteen years have passed—and that is a long space on a Golden Gate calendar—since Gerald French was the editor of the “Irish Eagle,” and filled many columns of that ephemeral sheet with essays on political dynamite.

One morning he had a visitor. There was a sharp knock on the open door of the office, and a voice inquired :

“Is this the office of the ‘Irish Aigle’?”

Gerald Ffrench glanced up and answered in the affirmative. He was well used to callers in the editorial sanctum, patriots from the Pajaro Valley and other outlying districts, who never visited San Francisco without stopping at the “Aigle” to ascertain if, perchance, that mighty organ of the Pacific coast Nationalists had fulfilled its mission, and driven into the sea the British garrison in Ireland. So, with a cheery tone as who should say, “England is all right as yet; but wait, we are not idle,” Gerald bade the visitor enter.

The latter came forward briskly, and dropped into the other chair. Ffrench saw at a glance that this was no horny-fisted farmer from Pajaro, no politician from Sacramento, no ditcher from the tule lands. He was an Irishman, of course—his presence in the “Eagle” office proved so much—but so far as Gerald could determine, he was a hitherto undescribed specimen. He was a man of thirty-five or thereabouts, and his light-brown hair was long and dishevelled. His face was as the face of a Nazarene, for no razor had ever touched it—a queer, small-featured face, masked by a thicket of whisker, and lit by bright, eager blue eyes.

“Are you the editor?”

His brogue was distinct and unmistakable, and yet he spoke like an educated man. Gerald was puzzled. He simply bowed, and waited.

"I've been a journalist, off an' on, for a good many years," the stranger went on. "I'm an Irishman by burruth, though you mightn't think it, for I've been so much away from the ould counthry that wandering on a foreign strand has dulled the spache of fatherland."

"I think I should have recognized you for a fellow-countryman," answered Gerald, suavely, "and I'm glad to meet a brother journalist, Mr.—Mr. ——"

"Meagher, sir; me name is Meagher—Carrick Meagher. It sounds like the name of a town, I know," he went on, apologetically; "an' so in wan sinse it is, but it's my name, too."

"Have you been long in San Francisco, Mr. Meagher?" inquired Ffrench, as soon as he had introduced himself to his new acquaintance.

"Not long, sir, not long. I came up from Callao last wake in a sailing vessel. Sartin sarcumstances," he went on, dropping his voice to more confidential tones, "not wholly unconnected wid a distinguished Peruvian family, compelled me to abandon a lukkerative position there, an' once more to clasp to my

bussum that chilling but familiar phantom, the wide, wide wurruld."

Meagher was a very little man, but so tiny was the office and so expansive was the gesture that he used to emphasize his words, that a whole flock of unsold "Eagles" came fluttering down from the shelves where they roosted. With a hasty apology he set about remedying the mischief he had caused. As soon as he had finished he resumed his seat.

"And now, Mr. Ffrench, I've come to apply for a position on the staff of the 'Irish Aigle.'"

Gerald checked the smile that rose to his lips, and answered gravely. He could not but notice that Meagher's garments, though whole and respectable, were worn with that indescribable touch of deprecation which goes with a single suit. He had caught a touch of wistfulness in the question, as the little fellow put it, and he fancied that the blue eyes which peered so sharply out of the tangle of straw-colored hair might well owe some of their eagerness to hunger.—Yes, to hunger. There is no city in our civilization where that torture of the destitute does not follow close on empty pockets. Gerald realized that a few weeks ago he had not been many meals ahead himself, and that the "Irish Eagle" had intervened only just in time.

But was that patriotic bird endowed with power of wing to support a double burden? Its editor might well doubt it. He shook his head, and explained the position to Meagher. The paper had been started quite recently by a little knot of patriots, and it was far from being a paying concern. There was no staff—only one young editor and one old printer, and the salaries of both were already in arrears. And then, by way of softening the blow—for that it was a blow the other's face clearly showed—Gerald applied the styptic generally recommended in California for all wounds of the mind and most wounds of the body; he invited his new acquaintance to come down to the corner and have a drink.

McKeon's bar looked bright and cheerful, and McKeon's "free lunch" was spread with true Californian prodigality. This lunch afforded as good a meal as a man need ask—soup, joint, vegetables, bread, and cheese; but it was "free" only in the sense that all who paid for liquid refreshments were welcome. To the man without a "bit" in his pocket, it was only one degree more substantial than a feast of the Barmecide. He could look, but he could not touch. Mr. Carrick Meagher, however, in right of Gerald's invitation, quickly showed

that, brief as had been his sojourn in San Francisco, he was no novice in the mysteries of a free lunch.

But appetite is intermittent, and Meagher, although by no means certain when such another opportunity might arise, was at last compelled to desist. As the pair passed through the saloon, Mr. Martin Doyle accosted Gerald and proffered further hospitality, at the same time requesting the favor of an introduction to his "frind."

Doyle was the president of the Eagle Publishing Company, and the most active of the governing body, which, though it consisted of himself and four friends, was generally known as the "Thryumvirate." The introduction appeared to afford satisfaction both to Mr. Doyle and the stranger, and the former's invitation to "thry a drop o' somethin'" was promptly and cheerfully accepted.

Meagher, fortified by a hearty meal and exhilarated by a little whiskey, became quite talkative; but his talk was interesting even to Gerald, while it seemed to hold Mr. Doyle spellbound. Very soon that gentleman suggested an adjournment to the back-room, where, with a bottle and glasses on the table and a big cigar between his lips, he listened with bated breath to Meagher's accounts of where he had been and what he had seen.

He was last from Peru, as he had told Gerald; he had been employed in some metallurgical works at Callao, and he assured his hearers that he was a first-class practical assayer and mineralogist. He did not touch on the reason why he abandoned the position further than to remark, with his hand on his breast, "A leedy's name must be sacred; ye'll excuse me, gintlemen, if I pass that by."

Gerald found it difficult to associate with the tender passion that diminutive figure and quizzical little monkey face, but he was polite enough to smother a laugh; while Mr. Doyle seemed to appreciate the situation, and to respect the other the more for his reticence.

"To be sure, Mr. Meagher—to be sure," said honest Martin. "I admire yer delicacy. But tell me, where were ye afore ye went to Peru?"

"I was war correspondent for the Cork 'Examiner,' an' I was shut up in Paris the whole of the siege."

"Do you tell me, now?" asked the wondering Doyle. At this time the great Franco-Prussian struggle was fresh in people's minds, for it was as long ago as '74 that the "Irish Eagle" flourished.

"I was indade, an' a great deal of trouble I had. No remittances from my paper could I get, an' many

a day I walked the boulevards hungry, wondering what was the best thing I could do."

"An' what did ye do?" inquired Doyle, with unabated interest, while Gerald experienced a certain relief at learning that his new acquaintance's penniless predicament was nothing new to him.

"Well, I enlisted as a *mobile*—that was four sous a day, an' a loaf of bread, and a shake-down in the Prince Eugene barracks."

Gerald became grave again, as he realized that this device was impracticable in San Francisco. At the same time, though Meagher was very glib with names, dates, and facts, the young editor began to suspect that the little man was romancing.

"An' ye were a soldier!" cried Doyle, admiringly. "Did ye iver kill a Proosian?"

"Never saw one that I know of till the day they entered the city. No; I was more like a kind of policeman."

At this modest statement Gerald's confidence rose again. If the new-comer had been merely bragging, it would have been so easy to sacrifice hecatombs of foes.

"Then I went a good deal wid the Irish colony—as many of them as were left," resumed Meagher. "The name I bore was passport enough for that."

“An’ d’ye mane to say that ye’re related to the great, the immortal pathriot, Thomas Francis Meagher?” inquired Doyle, in a tone of awe-stricken admiration that made Gerald a little uncomfortable. A pretty end it would be to his hospitality if his resignation were to be desired the following day, to make room for this ready-tongued upstart!

But Carrick’s answer reassured him. The Irishman might be a great boaster, but he was no liar, even when a lie was to his manifest advantage.

“No, I don’t think I am—I never could trace any relationship, anyhow; but you know yourself that nobody named Meagher need stand long knocking at an Irishman’s dure.”

“In troth an’ he needn’t!” answered Doyle, with enthusiasm; but he cooled down as he perceived how this deft and destitute little stranger had entrapped him into an admission which it might be inconvenient to live up to and impossible to retract.

Carrick saw his advantage, and drove it home.

“Now, as I’m temporarily embarrassed—in fact, as I haven’t a cint to me name,” he began, and Doyle shivered as he prepared to dodge the impending loan—I’ve been thinking I might be able to do something for your paper.”

Doyle breathed again. This was a business proposition, which could be met on a business basis.

"Well, I dunno," he said, slowly; "money's tight an' pathriots is poor. The 'Aigle's' not to say on a payin' footin'. Besides that, Mr. Ffrench here is fully aquil to all the wurruk that is to be done——"

"I don't doubt that at all," interrupted Carrick, with a queer little bow to Gerald, "an' I wouldn't presume to interfare wid him. But I've been looking at the paper. It wants some fresh departments. What d'ye say to a Paris letter, now?"

"I dunno," answered Doyle, slowly. "It sounds big and would look big——"

"To be sure it would—'From our own Paris correspondent;' an' it would trate of Irish affairs in the French capital. Paris is full of pathriots."

"Sure I know that," replied Doyle, feebly; "but I know no wan in Paris, an'——"

"Ach, if that's all," interrupted Carrick, with an indescribable snort of triumph, "I'll write you a Paris letter ivery wake in your own office. What's wanted for a letter? That ye know the city you're writin' from an' the people in it. Well, I know that—at laste the Irish colony, an' that's all you have to care about. Then with the French papers to kape me up to the time—an' those I can get here—I'll

turn ye out such a letter as any wan of your readers would swear came straight from the Boulevard des Italiens, av they'd ever happened to hear of such a place."

Martin Doyle wavered visibly. "An' how much would ye charge for the like?" he asked, at last.

Carrick Meagher's sharp blue eyes shot a quick glance through their hairy foliage. He was evidently settling in his own mind the maximum figure which the other might be expected to stand. Nevertheless, the pause was scarcely noticeable, and the answer came unhesitatingly: "Three dollars a letter."

"It's a go," answered Martin, knitting his brows ever so little. "Now let's have wan more drink to wet the bargain, an' then get to wurruk."

Carrick Meagher had gauged his man's financial stature almost to an inch. If he had asked for five dollars, the negotiation would have ended then and there. Martin Doyle had made up his mind to pay two dollars and a half per letter, but he had accepted the proposition, not considering fifty cents worth haggling over.

So Carrick Meagher joined Gerald Ffrench on the staff of the "Irish Eagle."

II.

FOR a few weeks the Paris letters appeared regularly. They were remarkably clever, and, notwithstanding the circumstances under which they were written, had an air of reality which might have imposed on readers far more critical than any for whom they were intended. By degrees, however, the correspondence grew intermittent, and finally ceased altogether. Modest as was the price agreed upon, it was not always paid. Indeed, any one of the "Thryumvirate" would much prefer to spend two dollars over McKeon's bar in treating a creditor than one dollar in paying him.

Carrick Meagher, who was really a brilliant man, soon fell into the ways of the new city, and, without attaching himself to the staff of any particular newspaper, was able to earn a good income by contributing special articles to the various Sunday editions. He had an easy, graphic style—not particularly polished, but always readable—and he was an expert on various subjects. At one period of his wandering life he had followed the sea, and he could write with knowledge on ships and sailors. He was a good practical metallurgist, and in California that is a trade which always commands its price. But

Carrick refused many tempting offers to resume his old profession, and contented himself with writing about it. His was a vagrant genius, and the independent Bohemianism of the life he led suited him perfectly.

Gerald and Meagher remained fast friends through it all. Even after the latter had left the "Eagle," he was always ready to assist its editor with his advice, or even with his pen when work pressed, and this at a time when the briefest article he wrote commanded fifteen or twenty dollars. In his moments of despondency he liked to entice Gerald away to some congenial haunt, and there discourse of his broken heart and the beautiful dark-eyed señorita who pined for him in Lima.

"Pobre cita," he would sigh, with a languishing roll of his funny little head. "The love that is sun-dered by seas an' years hath nothing to live on but thoughts an' tears."

Meagher was fond of interlarding his speech with scraps of verse, few of which Gerald could identify, while most of them were wholly unknown to him; so that he sometimes doubted whether to class these adornments of his friend's conversation as quotations or improvisations.

The true story of Carrick's ill-fated love may as

well be set down here, though Ffrench did not learn it till long afterward—not till H. M. S. Tenedos cast anchor in San Francisco Bay, and Ffrench made the acquaintance of a certain lieutenant who had known Meagher in Callao. The Irishman had seen the beautiful daughter of a high Peruvian official, as she drove past him in her carriage on the Paseo de los Descalzos. His combustible heart had taken fire at once, and happening to meet her a few days afterward near his place of business in Callao, he assumed that the lady returned his affection, and had merely sought the port for an opportunity of seeing him. In this conviction he had gone straight to Lima, called upon her father, and requested his daughter's hand. The old gentleman did not look with favor on the suit, and when he had consulted the young girl, and ascertained that she had never heard of her presumptuous wooer, he secured Meagher's dismissal from the government smelting-works in which the young man was employed, and gave him to understand that his future prospects in Peru were by no means rosy. Under these circumstances, Carrick found it advisable to depart, and he sailed for San Francisco without a single word or a second glance from the lady for whose sake he had borne so much. But he always kept her memory

green, and spoke of her—but never by name—with profound emotion.

Gerald, knowing nothing of all this, sympathized with his friend as one crossed in love and despotically separated from all he held dear; while Carrick, his eyes suffused with tears or blazing with excitement, according to the mood that happened to be uppermost, would bewail his evil fortune or drown his sorrows in whiskey, and sing almost in the same breath "The Girl I left Behind Me," or a French drinking-song in praise of "*la dive bouteille*."

The little fellow was as honest as the day, profusely generous, and endowed with a mind originally brilliant, and now stored, by reading and travel, with scraps of all sorts of unexpected and fascinating information. These are the equipments of a very agreeable companion, and such French found him; but Meagher had his drawbacks. He was absurdly theatrical in speech and manner, and this effect was enhanced rather than lessened by his diminutive stature—he was only just over five feet—and by the quizzical way his little face peeped out from his jungle of whisker, which nothing would persuade him either to trim or shave.

But such peculiarities were of small moment. Gerald soon ceased to notice them, and the two

spent most of their evenings in company. Carrick's stories of travel and adventure, surprising as most of them were, established their truthfulness by various minute details which no repetition could vary. He had endured many buffets from fortune. Once he had been rich—he had located a gold mine in Mexico; every possible test had borne witness to its value, and he had almost concluded the sale of a half interest for one hundred thousand dollars. But on returning to his location, accompanied by the experts whose report was to be final, he could not find the mine. The whole face of the country had changed. Carrick's claim had vanished, and the fortune he had so confidently reckoned upon lay buried beneath hundreds of feet of miry, pasty water. A mud volcano had come between Carrick and competence.

On another occasion he had been enlarging on the advantages of quick and straight shooting. "Niver pull a pistol unless you mane to shoot," he said, "an' niver shoot unless you mane to kill." This maxim he illustrated, as was his custom, by sundry leaves culled from the book of his experience. Gerald ventured to doubt one specially "tall" feat of marksmanship.

"If I had me own gun," answered Carrick.

"But sure I may as well have it as not. I can afford it now. Come along wid me."

He led his friend to an adjacent pawnshop, and there regained possession of a revolver which he had been compelled to pledge in the early days of his destitution. Ffrench witnessed half an hour's practice in a Kearney Street shooting-gallery, and acknowledged that Carrick had not exaggerated his skill with the weapon.

The Irishman was fond of the theatre, and was positively greedy of Shakespearean performances. He was always in his place before the curtain rose, and would sit through the five acts, motionless, silent, his eyes fixed on the stage. He was very critical of the acting in his favorite masterpieces. A popular tragedian arrived from the Eastern States, and gave, in the course of his repertory, two nights of *Othello*, supported by a local company. Carrick was present, of course. Mr. Kemble Scott played *Iago* the first evening, and *Othello* the second. It so happened that after the latter performance Gerald and Carrick Meagher, in search of refreshment on their way home, wandered into the hotel which Mr. Kemble Scott patronized, and there found him.

The actor had met Ffrench in New York during the latter's brief and bright days of splendor. He

remembered the young fellow, and greeted him warmly. Gerald took occasion to present his friend, Mr. Meagher, and the great man acknowledged the introduction with a patronizing nod; but Carrick had small sense of reverence, and absolutely no discretion. He had formed a decided opinion as to the merits of the two performances he had seen, and was as ready to discuss them with the person most concerned as he would have been to argue with Herr Wagner on the future of music, or to set right Professor Agassiz on a question of zoölogy. With his wonted volubility Carrick began :

“I’m glad to mate ye, Mr. Scott. I saw your two impersonations this wake.”

“Indeed?” answered the actor, with the stereotyped smile which he reserved for the compliments to which he was well accustomed. “I trust you do not consider your time thrown away?”

“Not completely,” was Carrick’s unexpected reply. “There were plenty of good pints in your representation of *Iago*; but your conception of the character of the dusky Moor was altogether erroneous.”

Mr. Kemble Scott was completely taken aback.

“Indeed!” he stammered, at last. “I trust, Mr.—Mr.—I beg your pardon, but your name escaped me.”

“There’s me card, sir,” responded Carrick, handing the other the bit of pasteboard. “I know how hard it is to catch a name as yet untrumpeted of noisy fame, but for all that there’s mine, and it’s one I’ve no call to be ashamed of.”

By this time the tragedian had mastered—as he imagined—the script on the card.

“Well, Mr. Meagre”—he began; but a bellow of indignant expostulation from Carrick cut him short :

“You needn’t thry to make fun of me nor of an honored name, becace I ventured to indulge in a bit of just criticism, which, av I’d known ye were so sinsitive, I’d have kept to meself.”

“I beg your pardon,” interposed Mr. Kemble Scott, still polite, though by this time he was not certain he had not to do with a madman. “I beg your pardon”—he scrutinized the card again—“but if you can pronounce M-e-a-g-h-e-r any way except Meagre——”

“Ye can pronounce it Mar, sir—same as if it rhymed wid ‘star,’ which you’re fond of calling yourself. Mar-r-r-r, av ye plaze, wid th’ accint on the r, an’ good-evenin’ to you.”

With this Carrick stalked wrathfully from the room muttering as he went, “I’m wrong to be

vexed at the poor fellow, for av he can't read an' can't act it's a bad lookout for him in his ould age."

Gerald lingered to offer the perplexed tragedian such explanations as were possible, and this ended the incident. Meagher, however, absented himself from the theatre during the remainder of Mr. Kemble Scott's engagement. Not even to see his favorite "Hamlet" would he condone the insult offered to his honored name.

Shortly after this occurrence—the most lasting effect of which was to inspire in Carrick a settled distaste to American actors—the "Irish Eagle" folded its wings, and died without a struggle. Meagher's advice and assistance now became invaluable to Gerald, and it was mainly owing to his friend that the young editor quickly secured humbler but more remunerative employment on the city press.

III.

FOR two years this oddly assorted friendship had subsisted, unbroken by even the most passing coolness, when a series of events led to a separation which Ffrench has almost ceased to hope will not prove permanent.

Gerald was attached to a stock and mining journal, and he frequently had occasion to lay under contribution his friend's expert knowledge of the subjects of which it treated. He was accordingly always well pleased to see Carrick enter the office.

Looking in one forenoon, as he often did, Meagher found Gerald seated, pen in hand, surrounded by specimens from an Arizona mine, which it was his immediate duty to panegyryze, or, in the language of the street, to "boom."

The little man dropped into a seat, and heaved a deep sigh.

"I dramed of my pobre cita last night," began Carrick. "Ah, love for a year, a wake, a day, but alas for the love that loves alway."

"Bother your pobre cita!" exclaimed Ffrench, impatiently. In these moods, as he knew from experience, Carrick could seldom be reckoned on for counsel or assistance.

"Ah, ye're young," said Meagher, not in the least offended; for he had at the service of his friends a temper which nothing could ruffle.

Gerald silently wrote on.

"What are ye doin'? Erectin' a column?" inquired Carrick presently, when the stillness had lasted as long as his voluble nature could endure.

"Trying to," replied Gerald, briefly. "I've a notice of this mine to write up for to-morrow's paper."

"This mine!" echoed Meagher, who had amused himself looking over the specimens at Gerald's elbow. "These half-dozen mines, you should say."

"Well, I shouldn't, smarty!" retorted Ffrench, who had been put out by the other's unseasonable love reminiscences. "These are all from one mine."

"Well, they're not; you can't fool me!" cried Carrick, with an awakening of professional interest. "Wan, two, three, four—these specimens are faked. They never came from wan mine, nor from ten miles from wan another. It's a salted claim they're playin' on you, my poor Gerald."

"Are you sure?" exclaimed Ffrench, dropping his pen.

"Am I sure?" repeated Carrick, disdainfully. "Do I know quartz from bitter spar, an' aither of them from metallic sulphides? What's that? Iron pyrites. An' what's that? Quartzose gangues. An' will you dar' to tell me they all came out of the wan mine? Go' long wid ye!"

"This is serious," said Gerald. "I know Verplanck fancies this mine very much, and is going to put money in it. Suppose we send for him."

The office boy was despatched to summon the proprietor of the paper ; and to him, in more temperate language, Carrick repeated the conclusion he had arrived at from his inspection of the specimens.

Mr. Verplanck knew his informant well, and had often profited by his trained experience in matters of mineralogy. The result of half an hour's conversation was an order to Gerald to tear up the article he had commenced, and begin another, denouncing the Ida mine as one of the biggest frauds that had ever been attempted on California Street.

Mr. Verplanck's virtuous indignation was whetted by the fact that he had himself narrowly escaped becoming a victim, and he instructed French not to spare his superlatives. Before the hour of next day's " Board " Ida's character was ruined.

But no man can put a stop to a nefarious scheme whereby others expect to profit without making an enemy of someone. The identity of the expert whose timely opinion had dealt a death-blow to this promising swindle was an open secret. Meagher received profuse thanks and other more substantial expressions of gratitude from those whose money he had saved ; but in certain quarters " curses not loud, but deep " were breathed on the " meddling little Irishman." Unfortunately, among those

whose game he had spoiled were some who were accustomed to carry their irritation beyond the blasphemy point—men whose path it was dangerous to cross, and who were not wont to stick at trifles in pursuit either of profit or of vengeance.

A few nights after the exposure of the "Ida swindle," as it was called, Gerald and Carrick attended a performance at the California Theatre. They had supper afterward at the Poodle Dog, and it was long past midnight when they turned into Mission Street, on their way home; for the two inseparables roomed together. Mission Street is a lonesome neighborhood after ten or eleven at night, and for block after block the friends had the sidewalk to themselves.

Suddenly, as they passed the corner of Fifth Street, three men sprang out of a dark doorway. Their feet echoed on the deserted pavement, and Gerald turned just in time to see a murderous bludgeon above his head. Instinctively he raised his arm, and caught the blow as it descended. The limb dropped to his side, numb and useless, and a feeling of faintness crept over him. The loaded stick was poised for a second blow. Gerald could only close his eyes and wait for it. He could not stir from the spot; he could not even look to see

how it fared with his companion. There was no time to collect his thoughts or rally his energies. Not three seconds had elapsed since he was walking gayly homeward, and now he stood, maimed and helpless, expecting nothing but death.

One, two—sharp and clear rang out the twin reports of a revolver. French opened his eyes. The blow had not fallen, and the assassin lay writhing at his feet, clutching the heavy “knuckle duster” in his convulsive grasp. In that moment the young journalist had tasted the bitterness of death.

Carrick Meagher stepped across a second form, prostrate like the other, but motionless, and covered with his pistol a shadowy figure, still visible a dozen paces off, but fast vanishing in the darkness. Gerald found his tongue.

“Shoot, shoot!” he cried, in a trembling voice. “He’ll be out of sight!”

Carrick appeared to deliberate a moment, and then returned the revolver to his overcoat pocket.

“An’ let him go,” he said, unconcernedly. “Niver shoot a man unless you’ve got to—that’s always a good rule. Let’s look at these fellows, an’ see what’s the matter wid ’em.”

Matter enough. One lay stone dead—shot

through the heart; and the other, even while they tried to raise him, breathed his last.

As they laid the body down, Carrick noticed that Gerald did not use his left arm.

"What's wrong wid ye? Did he get in a lick at ye?"

"Yes; I stopped the first blow with my arm," answered Gerald.

"An' a good job ye did," replied Carrick. "I dodged the welt that fellow med at me, an' then I pulled iron. Draw quick, shoot straight—them two mottoes, along wid a gun you can depind on, will carry a man across the wurruld."

Gerald's reply, begun in a spirit of incoherent gratitude, was cut short by the sounds of footsteps rapidly approaching. A policeman, attracted by the pistol-shots, came up at a run. No doubt it was the fear of some such interruption that had impelled the assailants to choose, instead of firearms, the more silent and no less deadly bludgeon.

"Here, what's the meaning of all this?" inquired the officer, as he halted.

"It manes," answered Carrick, calmly, "that some of the smarties who tried to put up a job on the Ida have been trying to put up a job on my frind an' me, but I got the drop on them."

Subsequent investigation proved that Meagher had correctly divined the motive of the attempt on his life at the very instant of its failure.

Other officers were summoned, and the dead bodies were carried away. The policeman who first appeared arrested Gerald and Carrick, and the party retraced its steps to the City Hall.

Meagher was uneasy and inclined to be restive under restraint.

"It's all very well for you to talk," he said, in answer to a reassuring remark of Gerald, "but I don't like it. I spent a whole wake in the lock-up at Valparaiso by rason of a scrape that I had no more to do wid than Noah's grandfather; an' I tell ye I don't like it."

But their detention was brief. As newspaper men, both were well known at headquarters, and, late as was the hour, Mr. Verplanck and several substantial citizens soon appeared in response to an urgent message. Bail was quickly arranged, and the friends found themselves at liberty.

"What shall we do now?" inquired Gerald, as they quitted the gloomy building on Kearney Street.

"Go home an' go to bed. What else?" was Meagher's matter-of-fact reply. "Sure it's after three o'clock."

Gerald expressed his willingness to retire, but positively refused to repeat the lonely tramp up Mission Street. He wished to go to a hotel, but it was difficult to make Carrick understand his reasons.

"Is it the other chap you're afraid of?" he asked. "I'll bet you a dollar he's running yet. Av he'd been any less scared, I'd have shot him too."

"No, it isn't the other chap I'm afraid of, but have you no nerves, man? Do you feel like passing the place where those fellows were shot down not two hours ago?"

"Sure they're gone," answered Carrick. "Didn't you see them taken out o' that before we left it?"

At last Gerald carried his point, and Meagher, grumbling at what he called "a sinseless bit of extravagance," secured accommodations at the Occidental.

The inquest completely exonerated the two journalists, and its revelations made a three days' hero of Carrick Meagher, who, however, bore his honors uneasily. As soon as the verdict of "justifiable homicide" had been rendered, he was at pains to ascertain that his bailers had been discharged from their bond. Then he went straight to the Pacific

Mail Company's offices and purchased a ticket for Hong Kong.

"What do you want that for?" inquired the bewildered Gerald, when Meagher displayed his purchase.

"I want it to go to China wid, an' that's where I'm going on the very first steamer, an' that's the day after to-morrow."

"What for?" gasped Ffrench.

"Well, several rasons. I've been longer in 'Frisco than I've any business to stay in any wan town; then I've been over a good share of the wurruld, an' niver yet seen a Jap or a Chinaman on his native heath; an' there's another rason."

"What is it?" inquired Gerald.

"Well—niver mind what it is," answered Carrick. "Isn't it enough that I'm blue-moulded for want of a bit of change? Let that content you."

"But it does not content me," urged his friend. "You are doing well here; you're happy and comfortable——"

"Ah," sighed Meagher, "it's little ye know. Pobre cita!"

"Well," pursued Ffrench, "she'll worry you just as much in China as she does here, and you won't have me to talk to. Come, take back your ticket—you

can get rid of it, I'm sure—and stay where you are. You had no notion of this sudden flitting a week ago."

"Well, I hadn't," admitted Carrick, with a burst of candor. "It's this way, Gerald. There's only wan thing in the wurruld I'm afraid of. If they locked me up, I'd die or go out of my head. I couldn't stand it."

"But why should they lock you up? You have committed no crime, and a jury has exonerated you."

"I haven't much confidence in a jury," answered Meagher. "I saw too much of them in Ireland when I was a boy. What odds what wan jury says? Did you niver hear of a flaw in an indictment, an' isn't it full as aisy to find flaws in an acquittal? No, I'll skip out to China while I'm free, an' while it won't cost Verplanck nor anyone else a cint, as it would av I had to be bailed again."

Gerald lost patience.

"Can't you understand? The law says"—he began, but Meagher interrupted him:

"What odds what the law says? It's always sayin' wan thing an' manin' another. I've no use for law; I niver had, an' I hate the sight of it. I can't help it; I was born so. I'd like a country

where ivery man's hands had to keep his own head, an' where there were wild bastes an' divils instead of lawyers. Day after to-morrow I'll sail for China, an' av ye'll come down an' see me off I'll take it kindly of you, Gerald."

And on the day appointed he did sail. Gerald, with many another friend, was on the wharf when the big steamer moved out, for the little Irishman had become both popular and famous.

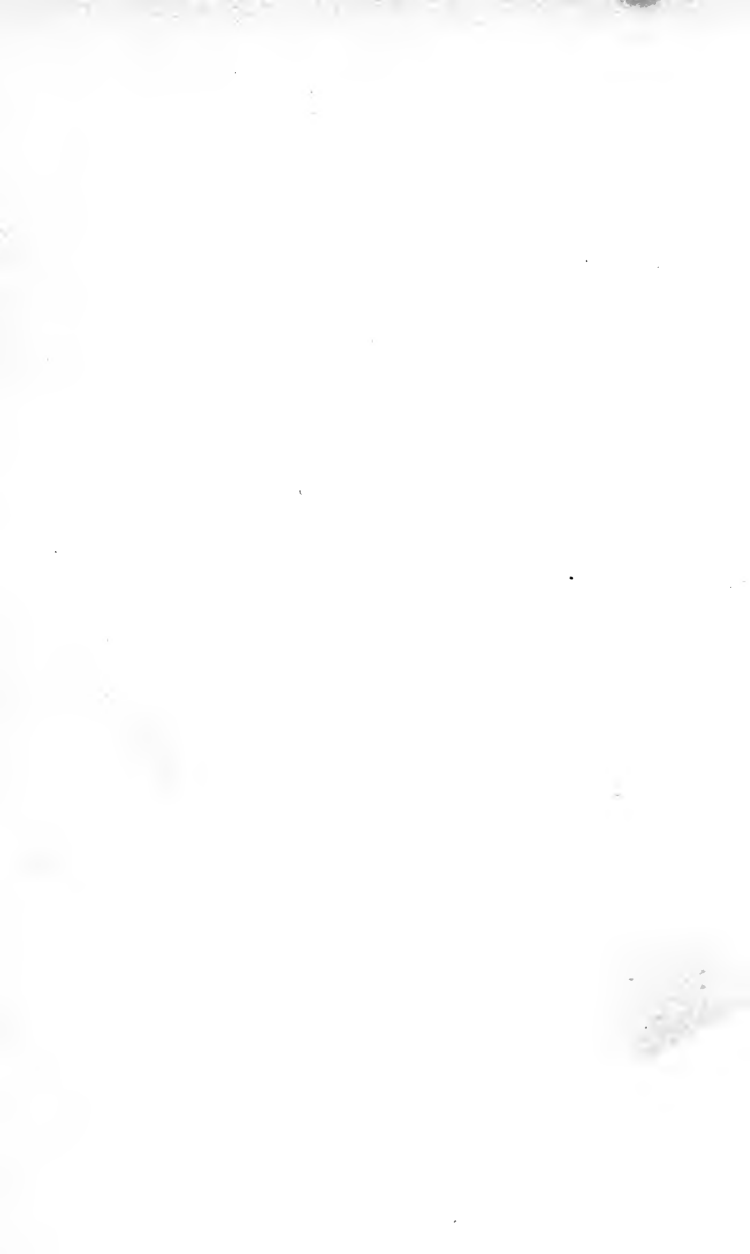
Ffrench's eyes grew misty as he watched the small familiar figure, till distance rendered it indistinguishable. Then he turned slowly away, wondering if they two would ever meet again. He put no faith in Carrick's promises to write, for he observed that the wanderer appeared to have left no correspondents behind him in the various lands he had visited. Ffrench's misgivings were justified. Many a mail came from the distant East, but never a line in the odd, sprawling handwriting which Carrick Meagher affected.

Gerald has paid more than one visit to his Irish home since those "Bonanza Days of the Seventies;" he has made frequent sojourns in the Eastern States; but he has never met his quaint and brilliant friend. He thinks of Carrick Meagher now as of a dissolving view of a very strange humanity;

coming out of the unexplored darkness, shining for a brief space with a fascinating lustre, and fading away again into unknowable obscurity. The circle of their two lives touched only at a single point.

Still Gerald cherishes the hope that he may see or hear of him again. No strange and mysterious individuality can arise to defy speculation without bringing up in Ffrench's mind thoughts of the vagrant genius who ate and lived with him for two years in San Francisco. When the young journalist read of the White Pasha, who had so wondrously appeared in the heart of Africa, he was seized with a wild idea that this might be his old friend. For Gerald Ffrench is well convinced that this was no ordinary man, and that no commonplace fate awaits him. Some day or another, in some strange and distant country, in some startling, unexpected way, Gerald looks to see written across the history of his time the eccentric signature of Carrick Meagher.

AT THE TOWN OF THE QUEEN
OF THE ANGELS.



AT THE TOWN OF THE QUEEN OF THE ANGELS.

THE party of sight-seers was more than an hour late for dinner, but that made no difference to mine host of the Pico House, who received it with smiles and would listen to no apologies. The visitors secretly exchanged congratulations, for their appetites had lost nothing by the delay and they had the dining-room to themselves. Mine host presided in person, since these were guests that he delighted to honor—representatives of all the leading papers of the Pacific Slope, each a living pen suggestive of boundless possibilities in the way of free advertising. The last link had been welded in the chain connecting Los Angeles with the great world; the last rail of the new extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad had been laid; not twenty-four hours before, the first through train from San Francisco had steamed into the new station, and this baker's

dozen of journalists had come down to write up the new road. They were lingering to write up Los Angeles, and should not the Pico House receive its share of favorable mention? Certainly it should, if unwearied hospitality and courteous attention on the proprietor's part could touch the hearts of newspaper men.

A merry party they were—a few from Sacramento, San José, and Oakland, but the greater number from the Golden Gate. The vineyards and orange groves of Southern California were new to them; they had been driving all day long through a semi-tropical fairy land; they were mostly young men, and as happy as school-boys out for a holiday. Had the host but known, it needed not this capital dinner with its accompanying fusilade of champagne corks to keep them in humor. Los Angeles was sure of a good notice.

There is a limit to the appetite even of hungry "scribes." The tables were cleared, cigars were lighted, and the conversation, which had died down to a dropping fire during the meal, flashed out brilliantly all along the line. The host, who was a martyr to gout, after seeing that none of the elements for conviviality were wanting, limped off with the waiters, but lingered a moment at the door to

catch the last strain of the musical honors with which his health had been received. Then Los Angeles was discussed with a fervor of praise that must have made the angelic ears of the pretty little city tingle. The strangers from the North sought, from such of their number as might be supposed to possess it, information on all possible and impossible points—the climate, the neighborhood, the antiquities, the beauty of the women, and the character of the men. And all thought that the pioneers of '49 had missed their opportunity when they had selected that sand-spit at the Golden Gate as the site of the metropolis of the Pacific Slope.

Gerald Ffrench, the accredited representative of the *San Francisco Evening Mail*, felt his honors slipping from him. All day long he had been the oracle of the quartette in his own particular carriage, and his decision on doubtful points had been accepted as final. To be sure, he had never before been in Southern California, but he had read up exhaustively in preparation for the trip; and most Irishmen, particularly at six and twenty, are apt to consider their information, whether acquired at first or second hand, as something well worth having. But now Graham Stokes, of the *Golden Fleece*, had quietly assumed a monopoly of knowledge. It

could not be denied that Stokes had a personal acquaintance with the country, and had lived there for nearly two years, part of the time at Los Angeles and part at Santa Barbara. He could speak Mexican-Spanish too, and if he had been infected by any of the raptures that thrilled the rest of the party, he had managed to keep the fact to himself. Calmly and confidently, he confuted two or three of Gerald's book-made theories, and established himself as king of the company, reducing the younger man to silence and champagne.

Graham Stokes was not popular among his brother journalists. Perhaps they did not understand him. In the first place, he appeared to have a greater command of money than was usual among Californian knights of the quill, and this was regarded as hardly respectable. In the next place, he had never been known to spend a dollar on anyone but himself—a most damning count in the indictment. Then, he dressed too well, and shaved every day, and wore gold eye-glasses. He never touched wine or spirits in any form—a circumstance so unusual at that day and place as to furnish grave ground for the worst suspicions. Nor could his abstinence be ascribed to any morbid conscientiousness, for there was an ugly story afloat that it was he who had led away poor

Doc. Brown the very day that esteemed member of the guild had obtained his envied detail on the Humboldt business, and had intoxicated him so grossly that the *Summons* superseded Brown and sent another man in his place. And it was notorious that Graham Stokes had secured the coveted mission. Here were grounds enough for unpopularity, without counting that he was a man of nearly forty, while most of his compeers were under thirty, and that he was very vain of his good looks, in a community which assuredly did not try to make the most of any favors of that kind which Heaven had granted its members. Doc. Brown had characterized him, not in the heat of debate, but in a judicially weighed and calmly expressed opinion, as "a treacherous, slimy snob," and the description had been generally accepted as accurate.

Still Graham Stokes had a manifest advantage in a gathering like the present. Nobody liked him, but, as he was not generally understood, so he was generally feared ; and he certainly knew more about the subject of immediate interest than did all the rest of the party put together. As the information he furnished was merely of a nature to amuse curiosity and of no value for publication, he gave it freely. On points of importance he exhibited a reserve

which did not escape Frank Hale, of the *Union*, who whispered to Gerald French that he would back the *Golden Fleece* to print the best Los Angeles letter after all. This was gall and wormwood to Gerald, but he contented himself with remarking that Stokes seemed in such an unusually giving mood to-night, that it would not be surprising if he ended by giving himself away.

Meanwhile Mr. Stokes, finding his audience to his mind, was chatting quite amiably. He had got on the subject of female beauty, always a favorite with him, and proceeded to fire the imagination of his hearers with glowing accounts of dark-eyed señoritas, olive of complexion and lustrous of tress, who had figured in the lighter passages of his life in the sunny South. The man was as vain as a peacock, and as he caressed his stubby moustache and related his adventures in his peculiar falsetto voice, Gerald felt as though he would have made some personal sacrifice for the privilege of giving the speaker one good, hearty kick.

"Here's a note for ye, Mr. Stokes," said a waiter, entering the room. Mr. Stokes took the little folded paper with an accession of importance. Its appearance proved that he had correspondents in the Town of the Queen of the Angels, and the man-

ner of its arrival showed that he, at least, was no stranger. The waiter had accosted him by name.

"How did it come?" he asked, leisurely opening the missive, which was without envelope or seal.

"It come be hand, sor; more betoken be a very yallow hand," answered the waiter, with a grin.

Mr. Stokes cast his eye over the paper and appeared both annoyed and perplexed. "Why, it's two miles off," he muttered; "more!" Then he glanced at his watch and fidgetted in his chair. Finally he read the note again. It was evidently of the briefest.

The incident had already raised Graham Stokes several degrees in the estimation of his companions. The message might be commonplace, but to their excited fancies it breathed of a moonlight tryst under the blossom-laden orange-boughs. Graham's stories had given their thoughts a turn in that direction. Conversation was suspended, and all waited to see what would come next. The waiter stood, balanced on one foot, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling. Apparently he was whistling softly to himself, but if so it was only the ghost of a tune, for no sound escaped his puckered lips.

Stokes seemed nervous and undecided. He read the note a third time, and then, with the air of a

man who has made up his mind, he crushed it together in his hand and thrust it into his pocket.

"Can I have a saddle-horse, right off?" he asked.

"To be sure, sor. Why not?" answered the waiter, without removing his eyes from the ceiling.

"Very well; tell them to bring one round at once," said Stokes; and then, as the waiter took himself and his phantom whistle toward the door, he added, "what kind of a night is it?"

The waiter paused with his hand on the latch. "It's a nice night, sor."

"What do you mean by a nice night?" asked Stokes, impatiently.

"There's a bit of a moon an' a nice breeze blowin'," explained the waiter.

"The fellow talks as if I was going yachting," said Graham. "Off with you now, and have that horse round in five minutes or less."

The waiter vanished, apparently whistling a quick-step, and Stokes rose. Half a dozen voices were heard in eager question, but he shook his head with a Sphinx-like smile.

"You must excuse me, boys," he replied, in his affected voice, "I never talk about such things. I shall be back before eleven, and I'm really sorry to leave this pleasant company; but, of course—

‘When a lady’s in the case
You know all other things give place.’ ”

The men exchanged glances as the door closed on Mr. Stokes.

“‘He never talks about such things,’ ” cried Hale, indignantly. “I’d like to know what else he’s been talking about for the last half-hour.”

“He’s only putting on frills,” said Gerald Ffrench. “I saw that note annoyed him like the deuce when he first read it. Most likely it’s a dun.”

“I don’t know the manners and customs of the Los Angeles duns,” remarked Tom Murphy, “but if they have the winning ways to take a man from the dinner-table and make him ride a couple of miles to meet them, they deserve to prosper—that’s all.”

“Very likely he’s written the note to himself, then,” suggested Ffrench; and, as illustrative of the esteem in which Mr. Stokes was held by his fellow-workers, it may be added that this hypothesis was not without supporters.

Up from the street came the sound of hoof-beats, as of a horse fast ridden. All listened, and Hale held up his finger.

“Well, if he’s made a rendezvous with himself, he’s gone to keep it, that’s all,” exclaimed that

young gentleman, as the trampling died away in the distance. "Whatever he's gone after, though, I'll bet he won't have luck with it."

"Why so?" inquired Murphy.

"Didn't you notice that we sat down thirteen at table," answered Hale. "It didn't worry me any, for I knew I was one of the boys. We are all twelve of a kind, and Graham Stokes was the odd man in this gang, if anyone was."

"Now, fellows," cried Gerald, briskly, "we're here in a new town, and we haven't begun to look into the night side of it yet. Come on, and let us take in the sights, if there are any."

Gerald thought that Stokes, present or absent, had occupied quite enough of one evening. The diversion was entirely successful. Fresh cigars were lighted, hats were sought for, and the journalists—an even dozen of them now—started out to see Los Angeles.

Long before eleven they were all back again on the hotel piazza. They were vaguely disappointed. What they had expected to see, not one of them, probably, could have told; one thing was certain, whatever it was, they had not seen it. They lounged in groups about the door or on the steps. The host, half-sitting, half-lying in a hammock, was enjoying

the last cigar of the day and talking to Ffrench, Hale, and one or two others. The waiter, his work done, was standing at the foot of the steps with his hands crossed behind him. He was looking up at the heavens, and the silent whistle was stereotyped on his lips. Perhaps he was calling the Dog Star.

"Yes, I knew him well," the host was saying in answer to a question from Hale. "He didn't live at my house; but he was in and out a great deal. That was six months ago."

Gerald Ffrench left the group. He was sick of the sound of Graham Stokes's name.

"He lived here quite a while, didn't he?" asked Hale.

"Over a year, off and on," answered the host. "He had some job in connection with the railroad. I don't exactly know what."

"Was he well liked?"

The host laughed. "Those that made him pay cash liked him well enough. Those that trusted him didn't. I've nothing against him."

At that instant the rhythmic beat of a galloping horse's hoofs was heard far up the silent street. The sound grew rapidly. All looked up and the host struggled into an erect attitude. Even the waiter brought his eyes earthward and listened.

With flapping empty stirrups and trailing bridle, a bay and white mustang came on at full speed. On reaching the Pico House he wheeled in his tracks so abruptly that he almost fell. Then, recovering his stride, he dashed past the building toward the stables.

The host was all alert in a moment, and despite his gout hobbled quickly to the end of the veranda and looked over. "He's gone straight into the yard," he said, and then, meeting the blank looks of the group of newspaper men, to whom the riderless steed suggested a tragedy, he added: "Wasn't that the horse Mr. Stokes had this evening?"

No one could answer; no one had seen Mr. Stokes ride away. Yes, the waiter had, and he banished the whistle from his lips and spoke straight to the point.

"The same horse, sor."

"Run round to the stable then, Pat, and tell some of those greasers to come and bring their lanterns."

Pat was off like a shot, following the same road the mustang had taken.

"Do you think——" faltered Gerald. The host cut him short.

"That an accident has happened? Of course I

do, or why should Pedro have come back alone? At any rate, it's our business to see. I wish I could go myself, but it's all I can do to walk the length of this piazza."

Gerald felt faint and queer. If any serious accident had happened to the man whom he had been hating so industriously all the evening, this visit to Los Angeles would be anything but a pleasant memory. The host's next words were more reassuring.

"Of course, it mayn't be anything. Mr. Stokes may have hitched the beast up somewheres, and he may have broke loose and run home. Still, I don't see why he should have acted so frightened, unless——" The rest of the remark was lost as the speaker leaned over the piazza railing and looked in the direction of the stables. Lights were twinkling there, and presently half a dozen Mexican helpers appeared, carrying large lanterns and headed by Pat, the waiter. The latter had put on a nondescript head-covering of the sombrero order.

"What's that on your head, Pat?" demanded his employer.

"Me caubeen," answered Pat, taking it off for a moment and examining it critically before he replaced it.

"I mean, are you going with the searching party?"

"Why not?"

"Go if you want to," answered the host. "I'd like to go myself, but——" he broke off impatiently, and pointed up the street. "Now, boys, that's the way Pedro came, and that's the way you have to go to look for the señor. Look for him well. Savey?"

"Si, señor," answered one of the Mexicans, and they started. Of course the newspaper men went also. Professional duty would have impelled them, even if the missing man had not been a brother of the craft.

On reaching the end of the street the Mexican in advance stooped and examined the ground carefully by the aid of his lantern. A short scrutiny sufficed, and he turned from the river and led the party westward at a brisk pace. They were soon clear of the town, and it was not difficult to trace the hoof marks in the sandy soil, even without other light than that furnished by a thin crescent of a moon. Where there was any doubt the lanterns were called into use.

Ffrench walked beside Pat. The waiter's eyes were withdrawn from heavenly things and fixed unwinkingly on the sand at his feet. His whistle

was almost audible. He was evidently pondering deeply.

"What do you think of this business, Pat?" the young journalist asked.

"Bad, sor, bad," returned the other, without raising his eyes.

"But mightn't the horse have broken away from some place where Mr. Stokes had hitched him?"

"He might, sor; divil a doubt of it, an' he might have tied a bit of cactus to his tail by way of keepin' him from missin' the spur, but I don't think he did."

"What do you mean?" asked Gerald, surprised. "Was there a bit of cactus tied to his tail?"

"There was, sor, an' a raal thorny bit, too."

"How do you account for that?" asked the young man.

"I don't account for it, sor; cactus is one of them things that won't bear accountin' for."

Ffrench was profoundly puzzled. Evidently someone, either Stokes or some other person, had sent the horse home and had taken precautions that he should lose no time on the road.

They were fairly among the orange groves by this time and their progress was slower, for the light of the lanterns was required at every step. There had been a high wind earlier in the evening, and it was

still blowing, though with diminished force. The dark branches swayed above them, intercepting the moonbeams. In the open spaces between the trees they could see the ground strewn with white blossoms, and the air was heavy with their fragrance. The grove was filled with voices new to the visitors from the north. Through the perfumed darkness came the rasping song of the cicada, the harsh croak of the tree-toad, and the whir of great insects that dashed at the lights with a sound like a released balance spring. Gerald had grown accustomed to these noises and, wrapped in his own thoughts, was hardly conscious of them, when suddenly another tone—a strange tone, and yet one that seemed oddly familiar, mingled with the babble of the southern night. French stopped abruptly and clutched Pat's arm. The waiter had heard it too; all had heard it, and had halted instinctively. The party was crossing a small opening and the young moon gave light enough to show the expression of doubt and disquietude on every face.

Again that sound—a bubbling, gurgling groan—the voice of a man in agony, the cry of a drowning man, and yet, even in its indistinctness, there was something of the falsetto utterance which was the peculiarity of poor Graham Stokes's speech.

Poor Graham Stokes ! It was thus that Gerald Ffrench thought of him already ; it was thus that he thought of him when, five minutes later, sick with horror, he bent above the body lying dead at the foot of an orange tree, with a shower of the fragrant blossoms mingled snow-white and blood-red above and around it, and the crescent of the new moon dropping a pale shaft of light through the boughs on the white, silent face.

Blood had flowed from the mouth and still hung there in bubbles ; blood, but not so much, had flowed from the breast and stained the clothing around the deep dagger wound which had let the life out.

“ Is he dead ? ” asked Ffrench, breathlessly, and one of the Mexicans, raising the arm of the stiffening corpse, let it fall again as he answered :

“ Si, señor, he is dead more as an hour.”

“ Impossible ! ” Hale broke in. “ We heard his groans as we were crossing that glade a moment ago.”

Pat, who had knelt by the body, shrank away from it. “ He’s cowl’d already, sor ; that must have been the banshee we heerd.”

A feeling of superstitious awe fell on the party. The Mexicans drew away and huddled together

like a flock of frightened sheep. Evidently it would have required little to make them take to their heels.

"Don't move," shouted Gerald, in a tone of command; "we must carry this back to the hotel."

"I don't think we've any call to disturb it, sor," said Pat, "until the polis comes. This is a murder."

The Mexicans caught at the idea. "Si, si, los alguazils!" they shouted and set off at full speed along the road they had come.

"Here, come back, you cowardly greasers!" called Hale, and Gerald laid his hand on Pat, who seemed inclined to follow their example. The swinging lanterns gleamed a moment among the orange trees like gigantic fire-flies, and then vanished. The terrified waiter drew closer to the little band of journalists, and the dead man, looking straight up to heaven with his staring eyes, lay at their feet.

"It's very strange, very!" murmured Murphy.

"It's more nor strange, sor; it isn't right," cried Pat; and then he broke off abruptly and raised his hand. "Hark! Didn't ye hear something?"

They had all heard it—a bubbling, gurgling moan, conveying in its agony an indefinable reminiscence of the dead man's voice.

They looked at each other with blank, horror-

stricken faces. No one could tell whence the sound came. Gerald bent over the body again, but there was no change on that pale face, no light in those ghastly, open eyes.

"Jintlemen, it isn't right, it isn't right!" screamed the poor waiter, in an agony of terror. "There's sperrits about us! For the love of the Lord, jintlemen, let us go home!"

"Nonsense!" said Ffrench, overcoming with a violent effort the strange sense of horror that seemed to chill his blood; "nonsense! Someone must remain here till the police come. They'll be along presently. Those Mexicans will give the alarm. It can't be far to the city."

"All of two miles," whispered the waiter, faintly; and Ffrench recollected that the dead man had spoken of a similar distance when he received the summons after dinner.

"He has been lured here on some pretence or other; this murder was a planned thing. The note you brought him at the hotel, Pat——"

He could go no further. Again that groan of mortal anguish struck on their ears; they could not determine its direction. It seemed to float down like the moonbeams through the blossomed boughs.

"This is past a joke," said Hale, in an awe-stricken whisper, falling back a step. Pat was on his knees, crossing himself with trembling fingers, and calling in incoherent prayer on numberless saints and martyrs.

"I—I think it must be fancy," hazarded Murphy, but his voice shook as he said it.

"Fancy or no fancy, I'll not wait in it another minnit," shouted Pat, springing to his feet.

"You can go if you want, Pat, but I think, boys, it's our duty to stay where we are," observed Gerald Ffrench, looking round the group.

A murmur of assent showed that the journalistic spirit was staunch yet, and Pat, after taking a few steps, slunk back to the others. He did not dare to face the horrors of the haunted grove alone.

"Oh, wirra, wirra," he moaned, "that it should come to this! I always towld him thim Mendozas was a bad lot, an' what did he want to make or meddle wid the likes o' them! Maybe it's because I brought him the note that he's come back to hant me."

"Do you know the man who gave you the note?" asked Gerald, eagerly, scenting a clew.

"No, I niver seen him before," answered Pat;

“he was just a common ivery day greaser, an’ I med no account of him. How was I to mistrust that he—oh, wirra, wirra, that it should come to this!”

“Who’s this Mendoza you were talking about?” pursued Gerald.

“He’s an ould greaser that had a bit of a ranch out San Pablo way; and he had a daughter that Mr. Stokes was said to be very swate on, but sure I dunno if there was anything in it?”

“Where is the daughter now?”

“Dead, rest her sowl, as dead as—as that wan there, rest *his* sowl, if it will rest. She tuk her life, at laste that’s what was said when they found her floating in the bay, about six months ago.”

“About six months ago!” The men exchanged glances. The date of the poor girl’s suicide seemed to correspond with Graham’s departure from Los Angeles.

“Was this before or after Mr. Stokes left?” asked Ffrench.

“Just afther! They did say that he’d promised to marry Inez, and that it was because he went off that she done it—the Lord pardon her.”

“And the old man—the father?”

“He tuk on terrible, and said that he didn’t give

a trauneen for his life once his daughter was gone ; but he had very hard feelins agin the man that druv her to it, an' swore he'd have his rivinge of him, if he'd to wait for it till the day o' judgment."

The newspaper men consulted together. Here was a clew, certainly. If Stokes had attempted to play the Don Juan among these people—hot-blooded and hot-headed as everyone described them, the explanation of the crime became simple. It was easy to conjure up the vision of a gray-haired father, living only in the happiness of a beloved and beautiful daughter. And when her corpse floated in with the tide, and the evidence of her shame furnished reason for her death—a piteous picture—it was not hard to imagine the fiery old Spaniard nursing the thought of vengeance as his only solace. This theory would explain everything except—

Again that moan, awful, weird, almost supernatural in its resemblance to the voice of the dead man who lay at their feet voiceless. The watchers drew together for a moment, and then, with one impulse, started in the direction of the sound, the trembling waiter crouching along at their heels like a whipped spaniel. His lips were puckered to their

habitual whistle, and seemed to accentuate, in some grotesque way, the terror on his face.

Before they had gone many yards they met the police, and hailed the approaching glimmer of the lights among the foliage as they might have welcomed the eyes of a friend. All turned back together, and in a few words Gerald put Captain Strong, who had come in person, in possession of all he knew about the tragedy. The captain heard him in silence.

"He put the letter in his pocket, you say?" inquired the officer, when Gerald had concluded.

"Yes," replied Hale, "he crumpled it up, and put it in his waistcoat pocket. I saw him."

The body had been lifted on a stretcher, and Captain Strong, bending over it, secured the paper. Carefully smoothing out the creases, he read it by the light of a lantern which one of his men held for him.

"It's written in Spanish," said the Captain; "a request for the deceased to meet the writer near the western edge of Jones's orange grove—this is the very spot—and it is signed 'Inez Mendoza!' Inez Mendoza! Why, that's the girl that drowned herself six months ago."

"It's a decoy letter, Cap," suggested one of the officers.

"That's plain enough! But who wrote it?"

The Captain mused a moment, and then resumed. "Harkins, go down to Mendoza's ranch—we're half way to it now, and bring the old man to town."

The policeman withdrew, and the others, raising the stretcher, stepped out slowly with their ghastly burden.

Pat had recovered some of his confidence with the arrival of the policemen and the lights. He kept by Gerald's side when they started.

"Aren't ye goin' to tell them anything about the sperrit groans, sor?" he asked.

"I don't know," replied Gerald; "I'd like to find some explanation of them myself first."

Suddenly the Captain halted, and raised his hand. "Hark! what was that?"

They all heard it, policemen, watchers, all! It came from the grove in front of them, and sounded weird and awful amid the wonted sounds of the tropic night.

"We've heard it several times," gasped Murphy, "and we can't make out what it is! And it has a kind of uncanny likeness to poor Stokes's voice."

The Captain glanced sharply at the motionless figure on the stretcher, and then gave the signal to proceed. The groans continued, always keeping a few paces in advance.

The cold sweat ran down Pat's face, and his nervous fingers never ceased to make the sign of the cross above, around, on every side of him. They all seemed uncomfortable—all but one old, grizzled policeman—and conversation sank to whispers, and then died out altogether. But the moans continued, still in front, as if summoning them on.

"Very strange, very strange!" said Captain Strong. He was thinking aloud, but he was not left unanswered.

"It is strange, Captain"—the speaker was the grizzled old officer who bore the feet of the corpse—"it is strange, but it's happened before!"

"Happened before! That a dead man should send his dying groans on before his corpse," broke in Hale; "for that's Graham Stokes's voice, I'd swear to it."

"You're right, an' you're wrong," said the old fellow, dogmatically. "This here corpse, as we may call it, has died of a stab in the lungs, if I make bold to mention so much in advance of the medical examination."

"I suppose so," admitted Ffrench, whose experience as a reporter had often taken him to the San Francisco morgue, and who could give a fairly expert opinion in cases of death by violence.

"Very well! How long does it take a man to die of a cut in the lung?"

"An hour, half an hour—I don't know," said Gerald.

"Maybe—maybe two hours? Ay, it may be three that this man has lain under that orange tree, waiting for his death to come to him, choking in his own blood and moaning in his agony."

All shuddered at the horrible picture thus vividly presented.

"Did anyone hear these groans?" went on the old policeman, who had by this time a breathlessly attentive audience. "No one, at least so far as appears."

"I beg your pardon," said Murphy; "we heard his groans for several minutes before we reached him."

"Asking *your* pardon, young man, you lie," returned the old officer. "He was stiff and cold before you got within a mile of him. I say no one heard his groans, but I don't say no thing heard them."

“What has that to do with it, Pachett?” asked the Captain. “Whoever, or whatever heard them, we hear them now,” for at that moment the dismal sound was repeated.

“Ay, and will hear them till somebody shoots that cat-bird,” said Pachett, pointing to a dark object that flitted among the trees a few paces ahead of the party. French recognized the flight of the California mocking-bird, called in local parlance the cat-bird, and as he realized the man’s meaning a familiar verse of scripture came to his mind:

“For a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.”

“Do you mean to say——?” began the Captain.

“I mean to say, Cap,” said the old policeman, that that there bird was likely sitting in one of them trees the whole time, and saw the meeting and saw the murder. It’s a pity we can’t subpeny it as a witness, but we can’t. I likewise say that that there bird, sitting in one of them trees, listened to that man’s groans for an hour or more—we’ve no way of being sure of the time—and is now repeating the new sound he has just learned, as is the nature of the beast. And as the sounds are not very agreeable, I’ll just take the liberty——” and the old

man discharged his revolver in the direction of the mocking-bird, which flew away among the trees with a shrill scream that still carried with it some strange reminder of the haunting moan.

The party exchanged glances; some of the younger men attempted to laugh, but without much success. There was an effectual check to merriment in that silent figure on the stretcher, and though the mystery was dissolved, there was little comfort in the thought. The bird had made them realize with horrible clearness the lonely and protracted death agony of the murdered man.

Pat gave voice to the general feeling as he shook his fist at the tree behind which the bird had vanished, and exclaimed: "Bad cess to ye, then, for an onnatural, hathen fowl, an' may the first bit ye ate choke ye for puttin' the heart acrass in me wid fright, an' amin to ye."

The journalists had arranged to return to their several papers on the following day, but the murder of Graham Stokes postponed their departure for twenty-four hours. They were obliged to wait for the inquest. French met Captain Strong the following morning, and asked if old Mendoza had been arrested.

"No, Harkins was too late," replied the Captain.

"But there can be little doubt but that Mendoza was the guilty party."

"Has he escaped, then?" asked Gerald. "Have you any prospect of catching him?"

"None," answered the Captain, with a grim smile. "Harkins found him lying dressed on his bed, with a pistol in his hand and a bullet through his heart. The thing is plain enough. He wrote to Stokes, whom he evidently knew to be ignorant of the daughter's death, and signed the letter with her name to make sure of the effect he wished. Well, it worked, and Stokes went to his death. No one knows what passed between the two men, but I think it is not difficult to guess. Mendoza has been almost crazy since his daughter's death."

"Then there is no doubt——" began Gerald.

"That your friend deceived her. I think not. It is a very sad story. I always thought that Stokes was a bad egg. Well, he's dead now, and his murderer must have gone straight to his lonely house, and saved the State of California the trouble of trying him. The inquest will be at twelve. So long," and Captain Strong strolled off down the street.

Gerald French found more pity in his heart for the Spaniard he had never seen—murderer though he undoubtedly was—than for the American whom

he had dined with the night before, and had met almost daily for six months.

Not one of the journalists will admit that he was frightened that night, or that any thought of the supernatural ever crossed his mind, but it is remarkable, in the full reports of the tragedy which appeared in the California papers, that no mention was made of the "Wandering Voice."

AN OLD MAN FROM THE OLD
COUNTRY.

AN OLD MAN FROM THE OLD COUNTRY.

AT five o'clock the harsh east wind, that bane of summer afternoons in San Francisco, had almost died away. It had been blowing with more than ordinary force, and the air was still full of drifting particles from the sand-lots—pungent, intrusive atoms that made eyes smart and lips crack. But the crowd, setting southward along Montgomery Street, was good-humored and jovial, for was not a great holiday in near prospect? A few days more, and the sun of the centennial year would rise on Independence Day—the Fourth of July, 1876.

Just outside the eddy of the crowd, almost in the doorway of the "Evening Mail" office, Gerald French stood and waited. He fidgeted and grumbled a little: that was mainly the result of impatience. He rubbed his eyes frequently, for the sand-dust was penetrating; and two gold coins

which he rattled in his hand gave out a musical clinking. They were both twenty-dollar pieces, for this was Saturday evening and pay-day at the office of the "Evening Mail."

Presently a short, thick-set man with a dark beard left the building and joined him. The new-comer wore a soft felt hat, a rather shabby pea-jacket, and a pair of spectacles. The rest of his attire was more conventional. Gerald greeted him with a reproach for his delay, and the two stepped into the street, moving southward with the crowd.

"It's all very well for you, Jerry," said French's companion. "You can feed the cashier with theatre tickets, and get your money ahead of your turn. I'll bet you were paid in gold too," he added, with some touch of injured feeling in his voice.

Gerald laughed, and clinked his two coins together. "Of course," resumed the other. "Look at me!" and from each pocket he produced a roll of whity-brown paper which looked heavy, and, as every Californian could tell at a glance, contained forty half-dollars.

"That reminds me—" said Gerald. "Wait a minute, Doc." They were passing a money-broker's office, and the younger man went in, leaving the other on the sidewalk.

They had always called him "Doctor," this man of the spectacles and shabby pea-jacket, but whether of law, physic, or divinity none of "the boys" at the "Evening Mail" had ever thought to inquire. His real name was Brown, and he was probably quite as ignorant of the origin of his learned title as was any man of the scores who addressed him by it. Possibly it grew out of his glasses.

"Well?" he queried, as Gerald emerged from the broker's office.

"Dollar and a quarter premium," answered Gerald, who had two of the whity-brown rolls in his hand besides some loose silver.

"That's it!" said the Doctor, with an indignant sniff. "Two and a half extra on your week's salary. Who wouldn't be in the cashier's good graces?"

Gerald indulged in a covert smile. The pair were warm friends and roomed together; but the Doctor had a habit of railing at his lot, and this special complaint recurred every Saturday night. It always ended in the same way, and Gerald waited for the suggestion that invariably closed the subject. It soon came.

"You're going to treat on that, I suppose?"

By this time they had crossed Market Street, and were continuing southward along Third. On an un-

pretentious corner stood a grocery, its front embellished with sacks of potatoes and baskets of vegetables, its windows crowded with cans of preserved meats, sardine-boxes, and the like, and its door invitingly open and level with the wooden pavement. A ruddy eruption of signboards all over the exterior announced that one P. Gerraghty dwelt within, and dealt in groceries of all kinds; also in fine wines and liquors and imported cigars. Evidently Mr. Gerraghty was ashamed of neither his name nor his business.

The two friends passed the long counter, with its flour-scales and its sugar-scales, and its flourishing Saturday trade in dry groceries. Gerald had returned no answer; the Doctor had made no further remark. His suggestion was about to be acted upon.

At the rear of the store proper was a snugly fitted-up bar-room, and over this portion of the establishment Mr. Gerraghty presided in person. He was a tall man with a dark mustache, and had a slight cast in his eye; not exactly the person you would care to meet on a lonely road at midnight, yet, withal, popular with his neighbors and a political power in his ward. He was standing at the end of the bar in conversation with a customer.

This latter was an old man, low in stature, spare of frame, shabbily dressed, and quite insignificant in appearance. His hair was of a brick-dust hue, plentifully sprinkled with gray; he wore a straggling beard of the same color, flecked with the same signs of advancing age; he lifted a pair of small, cunning eyes as the new-comers entered. Evidently he recognized one of them.

"Ah, Dochter, how are ye?" he said, in the broad, strongly accented tones which at once stamp the speaker as born somewhere west of Dublin City and east of Shannon Shore. The Doctor only nodded; the little man turned to resume his conversation with Gerraghty; but that functionary, seeing the two newspaper men range up to the bar, took his place behind it.

"What's yours, Doc.?"

"Cocktail," said that gentleman, laconically.

"Two cocktails," began Gerald, and then he hesitated. California hospitality does not wait for an introduction to proffer liquid refreshment. "What will your friend take?" he added, with a jerk of the head toward the little Irishman, and in a tone loud enough to be overheard by the latter.

"Thank ye; I'll take a dhrop o' whiskey," he answered, sidling between the two. A glass was

set out, and the "dhrop" he took was a fair sample of his national love for exaggeration.

The Doctor performed the ceremony of introduction. "Mr. Ffrench, Mr. Quinn." Such was the brief formula.

Mr. Quinn put forth an uninviting hand—not too clean, very thin, with large flat nails, and a net-work of sinews and veins prominent below the big knuckles.

"I'm glad to mate ye," was Mr. Quinn's remark.

"You ought to know each other," said the Doctor. "You're a Westmeath man, aren't you, Mr. Quinn?"

"That's what I am," he replied.

"Well, Jerry's from Westmeath too."

"What part?" The clannish instinct which is so strong in most Irishmen was evidently well developed here.

"Not a great way from Athlone," answered young Ffrench, indifferently.

"Ay, but where—which side?"

"Well, I don't exactly know how to explain," said Gerald, laughing good-humoredly. "You never heard of a small village called Lasson, I suppose?"

"Heerd of it!" shouted Quinn, apparently in a

state of wild excitement, "heerd of it! Wasn't I born there—wasn't I—stop, tell me—" In his agitation he clutched the lapel of Gerald's coat and hung on to it, looking up into his eyes with a strange, beseeching expression. "Tell me, are ye anything to his honor Mr. Gerald Ffrench, o' the Park?"

"Only his son, that's all," replied the young man, laughing.

The effect of these words on the little Irishman was grotesque enough. Dropping his hand from Gerald's coat he backed out into the centre of the room, and there uncovering, made so deep a bow that the rim of his soft hat swept the floor. Gerald looked and felt rather foolish. He had roughed it too long in America to appreciate this kind of homage, even if it had met him on his father's avenue; and here, in a San Francisco bar-room, with Doc. Brown grinning at his elbow and Gerraghty rattling among the glasses in front of him, it seemed particularly absurd and out of place. Yet what could he do? The old man was evidently sincere in his hero worship and enjoyed it thoroughly.

Would the idiot keep on bowing and scraping forever? Gerald felt that the situation was becoming intolerable. The awkward silence must be

broken by some more direct means than that suppressed chuckle of the Doctor.

"I suppose you knew my father, if you came from Lasson?" he said.

The old man stepped forward. There was a singular change in his tone, a mixture of deference and exultation, as he replied :

"Indade an' I did, sir; knew him well. He was me landlord—no, that 'u'd be yer grandfather, rest his sowl! Yer dada was only a boy when I left the ould counthry. Maybe ye mind me, sir, or me father—ould Luke Quinn, at the cross-roads. But sure how could ye? It's forty years since I left thim parts."

Gerald intimated that his recollections did not extend so far.

"An' why would you? Pat"—this to Mr. Gerraghty, who still stood behind the bar—"let me inthrojuice ye to Mr. Ffrench, o' Ballyvore Park; wan o' the raal ould stock. I've walked over ivery fut of his property whin I was a gossoon, an' I'd tire Betty if I druv her over the half of it in wan day."

Mr. Gerraghty did not seem very deeply impressed, but guessing that another order for drinks was imminent, he assumed a bland smile.

“Ye’ll take a dhrop o’ something wid me?” And without waiting for a reply the old man went on. “The best in the house, Pat, for Mr. Ffrench!”

Mr. Ffrench found the situation more and more embarrassing. He attempted to explain that the property in question did not belong to him, but to his brother; but this produced no sort of impression on Quinn.

“Sure it’s all in the family; the raal thing, the grand ould stock! Sure it’s proud an’ happy I am to mate ye in America.”

By this time the glasses had been set out again, and Doctor Brown, finding that something tangible was about to come of the queer scene, had laid aside his grin for the present and addressed himself to the serious business before him. But Quinn indignantly pushed the whiskey-bottle aside.

“Don’t ye know no betther nor that, Pat Geraghty?—and one o’ the raal Ffrenches o’ Ballyvore foreninst yer bar. Champagne, yer sowl ye!”

And champagne it was, a second bottle succeeding the first, for Mr. Quinn’s hospitality was of the absolute sort which takes no denial. Meanwhile he plied Gerald with adulation and recounted so many evidences of the former grandeur of the family that the young fellow began to feel a becoming

sense of his importance, and to realize that the population of California in general, and the editor of the "Evening Mail" in particular, had not treated him with the consideration due to his rank and station. Even Mr. Gerraghty, under the influence of his own champagne, thawed sufficiently to admit that it was a fine thing to see the aristocracy travelling about the world.

It needed a peremptory refusal to stop Mr. Quinn at the third bottle. Doctor Brown, whose eyes were beginning to snap and sparkle behind his spectacles, would have offered no decided opposition; but the Doctor was of very little account in the present company, and twinkled but feebly, with a reflected light, beside the greater luminary.

Convinced at length that he had touched the limit of Gerald's conviviality, the old man produced a buckskin purse and proceeded to select from a goodly store of gold coins the sum necessary to defray the cost of the entertainment. When he had settled he accepted Gerald's handshake, after a faint show of reluctance.

"Ye'll be here for a few days, I suppose?" he said, clinging to the hand which, now he held it between his own, he seemed in no hurry to let go.

"Here? In San Francisco? Oh, yes, certainly," answered Gerald, somewhat surprised.

"That's right, it's worth seein'; an' no one can show you round any betther nor I can. I've been on the coast since '46, an' I mind whin ivery fut o' these strates round here was nothin' but sand an' sage bushes. Maybe now," he added, persuasively, "ye've nothin' to do to-morrow. If ye'll mate me here at eleven, I'll have Betty out. Sure Sunday's a good day for a dhrive; an' she's an illigant mare to thravel, though av coorse nothin' to what ye're used to. Ye ought to see the stables at Ballyvore Park, Pat. Divil such a four in hand iver was seen in Westmeath." And leaving Mr. Quinn to entertain his host with tales of the vanished glories of Ballyvore, the two friends went out. As they passed through the grocery they heard the old man's voice:

"Gimme a dhrop o' whiskey, Pat. Champagne's cowl'd stuff for the stomach."

Gerald did not fail to ask the Doctor for such information as he could furnish regarding this new acquaintance. It was scanty enough. Brown had met him in court, where Quinn was prosecuting a case against some defaulting tenants. All Gerald could learn was that the old man owned a great

deal of real estate in the southern portion of the city, and was reputed to be very wealthy.

The following day Ffrench found Quinn at the hour and place appointed, and after a "wee dhrop"—Gerald won golden opinions from the old man by asserting that he preferred whiskey to champagne—Betty made her appearance. She was a slashing-looking bay mare, and showed plenty of fire and breeding. Though the buggy was plain and the harness shabby, she would have attracted the attention of the knowing ones in any show or fair. Gerald, who had all an Irishman's love for a good horse, began to look on Mr. Quinn with more favor and respect.

The drive was long and pleasant. Weather never interferes with an excursion in California, where a glance at the calendar, not at the barometer, tells whether rain will fall or sun will shine on a given day. The old fellow was amusing, too, in his own way. He was full of anecdotes about the Ireland of forty years ago. He had left his native land at five and twenty, and had not revisited it since; nor had the possibility of change entered his head. He was surprised to hear that Gerald's father had died several years before, though he acknowledged, on reflection, that "his honor would

be full oulder nor meself if he'd lived till now." The young people of the present generation were, of course, strangers to him. By and by he took up a question that had occasioned Gerald some surprise at their last meeting.

"An' whin are ye goin' home, sir?"

"I don't know," said Gerald, vaguely. "I'm living here, you know."

"Here!" The old man bounded in his seat from sheer amazement, and the spirited mare broke into a wild gallop which it took him some moments to check. Then he turned and looked at his companion.

"I live here; I'm working here; I've been at it for three or four years," explained Gerald.

At first the old man's face expressed boundless astonishment, but gradually a cunning look came into his little eyes. "Wurruk!" he repeated; "d'ye mind that now? Let me look at yer hands." He examined Gerald's soft palms. "Yes; I thought so. Sure ye don't expect me to believe the like o' that, sir."

"I don't work with pick and shovel," said Gerald, rather indignantly; "but I'm working for my bread just the same. I'm on the staff of the "Evening Mail," like Doctor Brown."

"An' what d'ye do that for?" asked Quinn. The expression of bewilderment on his hatchet face, enhanced by the comic confusion of his wind-blown hair and whiskers, was whimsical. He looked like a terrier dumfounded. Gerald laughed.

"I work because I am obliged to. Ballyvore belongs to my brother, as I told you last night."

The extraordinary fact that this young fellow had to earn his living appeared to be beyond the old man's power to grasp. "I thought there was money enough in it for six families," he gasped, at length.

"There's mighty little money in Ireland nowadays," laughed Gerald, lightly; "and not much of that comes the landlord's way."

"Get up, Betty," said the old man; and half a mile of the dusty road was passed in silence. His mind was evidently occupied with reminiscences of the old-time glories of Ballyvore, for by and by disjointed utterances began to escape him.

"Goold, solid goold! I've seen it! Wine an' whiskey, bottles—no, but barrels of it. Four hundred acres in the domain, sixteen horses in the stable, silver an' goold plate, an' the estate runnin' over the best o' two baronies." He started erect in his place with a jerk that set Betty capering again.

"But sure ye must have had some of it. It ain't in raison."

This was a sore subject with Gerald. "I had my share," he said, stiffly, "and—and I spent it."

"I'll go bail ye did, like the jintleman ye are! Get up, ould woman!" Another long stretch of road lay behind the mare's swift hoofs before Mr. Quinn spoke again, and then it was only to ask some trivial question about the duties of a newspaper man. Gerald could not help fancying that his revelations about the Ireland of to-day and the knowledge of his present employment had combined to sink him several degrees in the old man's favor. Not that he cared. Why should he? Quinn was a character in his way, and worth studying. He kept an uncommonly good trotter, too; but he was poor company, manifestly ignorant, and, judging from the place where they had first met and the purpose of the several halts they had made that day, probably a disreputable old drunkard—and certainly no fit companion for Gerald Ffrench.

Dinner at the Twelve-Mile House and a rattling spin home along the San Bruno Road finished the day. They drove down Market Street in the gathering twilight, and Mr. Quinn pulled up before Gerraghty's store.

"Does he live here, I wonder?" thought Gerald, as he alighted. "It looks like it." Then, resisting all the old man's entreaties to step inside and "thry something to lay the dust," he set out for the California Theatre, for even Sunday night has its claims on the time of a San Francisco dramatic critic.

Old Quinn grasped his hand warmly at parting. He had quite conquered his diffidence in that respect. "Look in an' see me whenever ye do be passin'," he said. "I do be here the most o' the time; an' any day ye feel like havin' another dhrive behind Betty, why, only say the wurrud. It isn't yer father's son that should be ridin' in thim blaggard street-cars."

II.

THE "Glorious Fourth" came and went, marked by unwonted splendor and noise all over the Union, and underscored with black in the private annals of Doctor Brown, who was called upon to surrender his desk at the "Evening Mail." That gentleman's turn for conviviality and his talent for chronic fault-finding had combined to embroil him with the managing editor, and he had received an intimation that his resignation would be in order. Brown had never saved a cent in his life, and Gerald realized

with some misgivings that his forty dollars a week would for the present be called upon to support two instead of one. He was walking down Third Street on the following evening, in a somewhat despondent frame of mind, when he was loudly called by name from the door of Mr. Gerraghty's grocery.

Old Quinn had evidently been celebrating the birthday of his adopted country after his own fashion, and he had not done celebrating yet. His small eyes were ablaze with excitement, his shirt was rumpled, his attire otherwise in disorder, and his "Misther Ffrench, Misther Ffrench!" sounded hoarse and strident.

Gerald would willingly have passed on, but this was not to be. The little man haled him into the group that surrounded the door of the grocery, and proceeded to introduce him by name to every member of the party, with a running commentary on the splendors of Ballyvore and an enthusiastic indorsement of the young fellow himself as "wan o' the raal ould stock."

This was a disagreeable experience. The old man was undeniably the worse for liquor; most likely, as he had abundant leisure and more money than he knew what to do with, drunkenness was his normal condition. Gerald extricated himself

with some difficulty from these maudlin attentions, and continued on his way. Clearly Mr. Quinn was not an acquaintance to be cultivated.

Yet it was difficult to avoid meeting him. Gerald lived in Howard Street, and naturally had to pass Gerraghty's door at least twice a day, and Gerraghty's was evidently the old man's headquarters. Sometimes he would be in the saloon, sometimes in front of the grocery; but, as he had said himself, he was there "most o' the time." In the course of a few weeks he had fully digested the idea of Mr. Ffrench's servile position—for so he evidently considered it—and set himself with a faithful persistence that was almost touching to lighten its burdens by every means in his power. Unlimited liquor appeared to the old fellow the simplest and most direct alleviation; and as Gerald could not always fence successfully with such persistent hospitality he soon found himself drinking more than was good for him. Loans of money were frequently proffered, in sums ranging from five to one hundred dollars, but these Gerald invariably declined. Finally one day—it was the 1st of August, and an appointment had been made in which Betty was involved—the old man's liberality took a flight as magnificent as it

was unexpected. Gerald found him, as had been arranged, in Gerraghty's saloon. He was poring over a morning paper, but looked up as the young fellow entered. "I was gettin' the news," he said, with an odd expression, half of doubt, half of bravado, the significance of which Gerald did not at the moment understand.

"Have you? There's not much in the papers to-day," he answered.

"There is not. You've read them, I suppose?" inquired Quinn.

"Yes, I looked them over at breakfast."

"An' now what sthruce ye in them? What was the biggest bit of news ye could find?"

"Nothing," said Gerald, laughing. "Did you find any?"

"Divil a wurrud," answered Quinn with a sigh.

This kind of colloquy was not unusual. The old man seemed to be an attentive reader of the papers, and he rarely met Gerald without asking him his opinion on the news of the day.

"It seems to me you never find much news, Mr. Quinn," remarked French.

"What's the reason I don't? Sorra much has happened this twenty years that I can't tell ye." The old man spoke rather warmly and seemed

hurt and indignant. After a few minutes he went out to fetch the buggy, and Gerald turned to Gerraghty, who occupied his usual place behind the bar.

"What's the matter with Mr. Quinn? He seems out of sorts this morning."

Gerraghty had a friendly feeling for Gerald, in whom he recognized a source of profit only to be gauged by the young man's capacity for liquids. Before answering he peeped round the bar to assure himself that Quinn was out of ear-shot.

"The ould fellow can't read," he said with a grin.

"Can't read!" repeated Gerald, profoundly astonished. "Why, I see him reading the paper every day."

"Ye see him houlding it; but divil a line of it can he spell. He can't neither read nor write; an' when he has business at the Hibernia Bank he has it fixed so that they let him in ten minutes before the doors are opened, so that no one won't see him make his mark. Oh! he's quare."

"But what does he take the papers for?" asked Gerald, to whom this revelation was almost incredible.

"So as to fool you an' others like you. Oh, he's cute; but ivery wan who knows him well sees how

it is. No one dar' hint as much to him though. Whisht ! here he's comin'." And Quinn entered.

His ill humor had already evaporated and they started in good spirits. This time their course lay among the small residence streets which abound in that neighborhood. It was the first of the month, and the old man was out collecting his rents. He visited a number of the little frame houses which are crowded together in that populous quarter and returned from each with a double handful of silver. A large bag which lay under the seat of the wagon grew rapidly in bulk and weight as the day advanced. It was plain that the old fellow's wealth was no fable.

"How much are you worth, Mr. Quinn?" asked Gerald, in a moment of pardonable curiosity.

The old fellow leered at him with a cunning expression. "I'll tell ye," he said, "for maybe ye'll need to know wan o' these days. A little over a quarter of a million." Gerald gasped. He knew Quinn was well to do, but had never imagined that his means approached such a figure. The other noted his astonishment with evident satisfaction.

"I suppose you must have struck it rich in the diggings in the old days?" Ffrench remarked by way of saying something.

"I never struck a pick in the ground in Californy, an' I w'u'dn't know the color if I seen it," said Quinn. Then he closed his left eye, and laid his head on one side like a disreputable but preternaturally wise old magpie. "What's the use o' goold? Ye can spind that, but ye can't spind land. When I come here all this was sand-hills. I bought it by the acre, and I've sowld a good share of it by the fut. There's nothin' like land," he ejaculated with a fervor that was almost pious in its intensity. "See here, Masther Gerald! Is yer brother married?"

"No," answered Gerald, not a little surprised by the sudden question. "Why?"

"It's a sin an' a shame, sir, that you should be wastin' yer life here among a lot of rayporthers not fit to black the boots o' the likes o' ye. It's home ye ought to be, an' livin' like a jintleman."

"On what would I live like a gentleman if I were at home, I'd like to know?" inquired Gerald, laughing.

"Och, if that's all, yer honor, ye can have five thousand dollars to-morrow—ten, if five isn't enough; an' more whin that's done. Go home, yer sowl ye, an' go into Parleymint—ye've the brains to do it; an' if it's only money's wantin', come to ould Luke Quinn."

There was no mistaking this offer. It was made in sober earnest, and the old man's sincerity was unquestionable. It was difficult for Gerald to make him understand the impossibility of such a scheme, but he did comprehend that his generous proposal was not accepted; and the refusal seemed to cut him to the heart. Despite all the efforts of the younger man, the drive was finished in silence.

That day Gerald wrote to his sister and asked her to find out what she could about a family named Quinn, who had lived near Lasson in his grandfather's time, and had been tenants on the estate. He also attempted a little missionary work with the old man, and tried to get him away from Gerraghty's saloon and its unfailing rounds of drinks. Old Quinn's health was far from robust, and the young man could not help noticing the growing effects of this incessant dissipation. His success was not conspicuous; but he fancied he was of some service, and the old man took the interference in good part. This and the remembrance of Quinn's hearty, disinterested generosity combined to raise him considerably in Mr. Ffrench's estimation.

It was not till near the end of August that Doctor Brown heard of a fresh opening for his talents. He was offered a place on the "Sacramento Union,"

and he was to start at once. But here a difficulty presented itself. It would require about twenty dollars to settle up various little matters and pay the fare. Gerald, who had been supporting both himself and his friend for nearly two months, had no cash on hand and none to hope for till salary day. The Doctor had made an ineffectual attempt to borrow, and now it seemed as if the poor fellow must lose a good chance for want of a paltry twenty dollars. Gerald determined to put his dignity by and ask Quinn for the money.

He found the old man in Gerraghty's and prompt to accommodate him. "Twinty, is it?" he said—"no, but fifty. Come wid me, an' I'll get it for ye at wanst." This rather surprised Gerald, who knew that Quinn habitually carried large sums about him. However he accompanied the old fellow, assuming that he would take him to the Hibernia Bank, where he kept an account. Not so, however. They crossed Third Street, and proceeded along one of the narrow thoroughfares in which Mr. Quinn's house property lay.

He was in high good humor. The question of the loan had brought up the subject of money, always a favorite topic with a man who has plenty. He narrated how many appeals were almost daily

made on his purse, and explained with a crafty leer how he avoided them.

"Only yisterday," he said, "that fellow wid the specs—the Dochter, ye call him—wanted to sthrike me for twinty. D' ye think he got it? Not much. I've no money for the likes o' him." Gerald, who had several times been on the point of explaining that the loan he solicited was for the Doctor's use, congratulated himself that he had not spoken.

"Not but what he has a great rispict for me," pursued Quinn. "They do all have the hoight o' rispict for me round these parts. When I towld the Dochter that money was tight an' I c'u'dn't raise the like, sez he, 'Quinn, ye're an ould misanthrope,' sez he. I mind the wurrud well, for I med him say it over two or three times;" and the old fellow grinned in his appreciation of this peculiar compliment.

By this time they were in Jessie Street.

"Be aisy now," said Quinn, "I'll bring ye the money in two shakes of a mare's tail." And he ran nimbly up the steps of one of the frame houses which owned him as lord.

He returned presently, evidently greatly chagrined and discomfited. "W'u'd ye belave it," he exclaimed angrily; "here it is within two days o' the first o'

the month, an' the dhirty mane spalpeen won't gimme a thrifle of a few dollars in advance o' the rint that 'll be due the day afther to-morrow."

Gerald hastened to assure him that if he had not the money by him it was no manner of consequence, that he had no intention of occasioning his kind friend any inconvenience, and much more in the same strain, but the old man cut him short by running up the steps of another house. The same result followed; and it was not till he had failed in four several attempts to borrow the amount among his tenants that he drew the faded buckskin purse from his pocket, and, pouring a mingled mass of gold and silver into his shaking hand, entreated Gerald to take whatever he required. Gerald selected a twenty-dollar piece, thanked him, and withdrew, much marvelling at the old man's business methods.

III.

THIS oddly assorted friendship continued without interruption throughout the winter of 1876. A quarrel had nearly arisen when Gerald after a few weeks brought back the twenty dollars and attempted to return it. The old man seemed so

sincerely hurt and grieved that Gerald relented and pocketed his pride and his gold-piece together, preferring to remain under an obligation which, after all, he could not cancel, rather than wound Quinn in what was seemingly the only sensitive point of his nature. Emboldened by this triumph, the old man recurred to his favorite scheme of "making a jintleman o' Masther Gerald;" but here the young man was immovable, and the other discontinued his persuasions with a sigh that "the likes o' him should have to wurruk."

In due course Gerald received an answer from his sister. After the usual quota of home gossip and news, he came upon this paragraph :

"There are no Quinns on the place now. There was a family on the Athlone side of Lasson, but they were cleared out in grandpapa's time. Mr. Brooke remembers them well, though, and speaks of old Luke Quinn as the worst tenant, and most inveterate poacher on the property. The son was a worse scamp than the father, and went to America. Mr. Brooke says he must be quite an elderly man if he hasn't been hanged. The old man gave no end of trouble to grandpapa, who was finally compelled to take up the farm. Mr. Brooke thinks that old Quinn was transported afterward, but he isn't sure. What on earth do you want with all

this queer Old World history? Are you going to write a book?"

And so the letter branched out to other topics.

Undoubtedly the wealthy Mr. Quinn of San Francisco was no other than the scapegrace son of a worthless father, and the respectable agent of Ballyvore seemed to think that if he was still alive it was only because the hangman had neglected his opportunities. "It's a strange world," reflected Gerald; "but whatever he may have been before I was born, he has loyalty to the old name now, and a soft spot in his heart for the old country."

Mr. Ffrench was surprised to find that he had learned to like the old man before the last clouds had rolled away from the spring of 1877. The mixture of shrewdness and simplicity; the transparent pretence of education, at which he had long ceased to smile; above all, the evident pride and delight which Quinn took in his society—all appealed strongly to the warmer side of his nature. The old man still introduced him to his friends as "wan o' the raal ould stock," and prosed away in his cups about the splendors of Ballyvore; but the cadet of that ancient house was growing accustomed to this. The two drove together every Sunday, saw each other at least once every day, and patronized Ger-

raghty at frequent intervals, to the entire satisfaction of that enterprising grocer.

One day—it was early in June—Gerald, on his way home, missed the familiar figure from the door of the grocery. He gave the matter little thought at the moment, but when another day passed without his seeing Quinn, he stepped into the store to inquire.

Poor old man! He had met with an accident on the road the previous day—had been thrown from his buggy and picked up insensible. Gerraghty did not know whether he had a “load” at the time, but opined that he had. Anyhow, he was in a bad way. The saloon-keeper spoke feelingly, as one who deplored the possible loss of his best customer, and Gerald became seriously uneasy. He would go and see Quinn at once. Gerraghty furnished the address, and advised him to carry a bottle of whiskey to the patient; but this he declined.

As he walked toward Mission Street he remembered with some surprise that he had never yet visited Quinn in his own home. He did not even know whether the old fellow was married or single, though negative evidence naturally inclined him to the latter view. They had always met in the street or in Gerraghty’s store, which was odd considering

how closely the bonds of their strange intimacy had been drawn in the past year. But here was the number, only a few doors up Mission Street, and his hand was on the bell. It was answered by a civil-spoken Irishwoman, who, in reply to his inquiry, showed him into a room on the ground floor. As he entered, a Mr. Conley, a lawyer with whom he had some slight acquaintance, passed out. Gerald was surprised at the warmth with which this gentleman shook his hand, and he fancied he caught the words "lucky fellow" in the whispered greeting; but he had no time to speculate on their application. Poor old Quinn lay on the bed—a cheap, uncomfortable-looking bed, quite in character with the ill-furnished, cheerless room. He looked thin and shrunk under the coverlet, and very weak. A stranger, evidently a physician, turned from the bedside as Gerald entered, but the old man beckoned him back and feebly extended his hand toward his visitor.

"Docther," said he in a faint, hoarse whisper, "I want to inthrojuice ye. This is me fri'nd,"—there was an emphasis of indescribable pride about this word, and he repeated it—"me fr'ind Mr. Ffrench o' Ballyvore Park. Wan o' the raal ould stock, sir, an' the grandest in the barony."

"Oh, hush, hush, Quinn!" cried Gerald, deeply shocked. The old man's adulation seemed to him ghastly and unnatural at such a time. The doctor acknowledged the introduction by a curt nod, and taking up his hat and gloves moved toward the door. "You mustn't try to talk much, Mr. Quinn; I'll look in again in a couple of hours," he said, and went out.

"How did this happen?" asked Gerald, drawing a chair to the bedside and taking the thin old hand in his own; "and why didn't you send to let me know?"

"It was a poor place to bring you to, Masther Gerald, an' I didn't like; but sure I'm glad to see you now you are in it."

"But why should a man of your means live like this?" The question leaped to Gerald's lips, but remained unspoken. As he looked he realized that it mattered little where the old man should live—or die—now.

"An illigant place entirely," muttered old Quinn, "and he come to see me! Ah, Masther Gerald, it's aisy seein' you're wan o' the raal ould stock."

He was silent a moment, and then began again. "Arrah, bad cess to ye, Betty; wasn't trottin' good enough for ye, but ye must turn to an' kick the

wagon over?" Another pause. "Masther Gerald, Masther Gerald, avick!"

"What is it, Quinn?"

"I had Counsellor Conley here just now doin' some writin' for me. I write an illigant hand, but I'm wake wid this thrubble."

"I saw him, Quinn. What about it?"

"We didn't get to finish. Rache me it there, av ye plaze. See it beyant?"

Gerald found a large legal-looking sheet of paper lying on the table among cigar-butts and broken glasses. He handed it to the old man.

"Yer honor can finish it for me, as well as another. All it wants is me name. Write it down at the ind."

The first line of the document, boldly engrossed in large letters, caught Gerald's eye. He read it at a glance: "Last will and testament of Luke Quinn." He stared aghast.

"Sign your name?" said the young man. "I can't do that."

"An' why not, whin I give ye l'ave? Sure who'll be a haporth the wiser?"

"I can write it, but we must have witnesses; and you must touch the pen and say over some form, which I have forgotten."

“Och, what’s the use of all that botheration? The lawyer would ha’ finished it for me, only I was wake and c’u’dn’t go on. Whisper, Masther Gerald, avick. Write ‘Luke Quinn’ at the bottom o’ that, an’ it’ll be the betther for ye.”

“Bùt indeed, Quinn, it would be impossible,” said Gerald, sorely put out by the old man’s helpless pleading. “It would mean no more than if it had never been written, and would only get me into trouble.”

“Who’s to know?” urged Quinn. “Whisper till I tell ye—no one will mistrust but I wrote it meself; no one knows me hand, an’ me writin’s the very moral o’ yer own anyway: ye c’u’d make twins o’ thim.”

Gerald could hardly repress a smile. The old man continued to urge and entreat, but, as may be imagined, without result. Finally he said: “Put it back thin; I’ll l’ave it till to-morrow. Maybe I’ll be well enough to do it meself by that time. I won’t kape ye here any longer, Masther Gerald. I think I c’u’d doze a bit.”

Gerald withdrew, promising to look in the first thing in the morning; and, having ascertained from the woman of the house that Mr. Quinn was in good hands, returned home. He could not help

laughing at the old man's attempt to sign his will by proxy, but he was uneasy and anxious nevertheless.

The same evening Mr. Conley called upon him and told him that his old friend had died in his sleep, probably about an hour after Gerald had left the bedside. "And do you know," added the lawyer, "you came as near inheriting three hundred thousand dollars as a man can come and not get it?"

"How was that?" asked Gerald, listlessly. The news of Quinn's death, though not unexpected, had come upon him with the suddenness of a shock, and affected him deeply.

"I'll tell you," said Mr. Conley. "It must be six months ago that Quinn instructed me to draw up his will. He left you everything, but from that day to this he never would sign it."

"Why not?" asked Gerald. He readily guessed the cause, but he was determined to keep the old man's secret.

"Sometimes one reason, sometimes another. When he met with this accident he sent for me post-haste to bring the will. Did he sign? Not a bit of it. He was too weak, he said. I offered to call in witnesses and fill in the signatures in his

presence in the usual way. He became bitterly indignant. 'What, make me mark!' he said. 'I never did that in me life, and I won't begin now.' I was just leaving when you came in."

"Where will his money go?" asked Gerald.

"Oh, to his relatives in Ireland, I suppose," said the lawyer. "That kind of man always has plenty."

The following Sunday there was a big funeral—an Irish funeral, with scores of carriages and unlimited whiskey. Gerald Ffrench attended, and so did Mr. Gerraghty—Doctor Brown was in Sacramento. Gerald's eyes were a little misty as the earth fell on the coffin—a very handsome coffin with a silver plate. The old man had grown on him wonderfully, and he missed him more than he could have believed possible.

The contest over Luke Quinn's property is going on still in the California courts. Every Quinn in the State is represented by counsel, but flowers are not often seen on the old man's grave. It is only occasionally that Gerald Ffrench's Sunday stroll takes him in the direction of Lone Mountain.

THE LAST OF THE COSTELLOS.

THE LAST OF THE COSTELLOS.

I.

"NOT another step, Dr. Lynn," said Gerald French, stopping the old gentleman at the little gate in the hedge which divided the Rectory lawn from the churchyard, "I won't have you coming any farther."

"My dear boy," returned the rector with a kindly smile, "I am still in my own domain and I won't be dictated to. Besides, the little walk will do me good. I shall see you at least as far as the lower road."

The gate swung behind them and they threaded the narrow path among the grave-stones. It was an obscure little country burying-ground and very ancient. The grass sprang luxuriant from the moldering dust of three hundred years, for so long at least had these few acres been consecrated to their present purpose. Gerald stopped once or twice to decipher, as far as the failing light of the January

afternoon would permit, the inscription on a stone near the path.

"You won't find many new-comers," observed the rector. "A few of course: the years must bring their changes, and you have been away—let me see——"

"Six years," said Gerald, with a half sigh, as he recalled the hopes that had withered, the ambitions that had faded, the pleasures that had vanished, and the residuum that had lingered from six years of active, breathing life. And yet he was only twenty-seven.

At twenty-one he had left the home-nest, behind those trees which broke the horizon line in the north. His wanderings had led him far afield. He had fallen into the whirring machinery of life, and the machinery had jarred and hurt him. Now he had come home for a few weeks of rest and pleasure. He knew it could not be for long, for he had, with infinite pains and labor, carved for himself a little niche in the world's great gallery, and he could not afford to leave it empty. In other words, he was a young journalist, holding a good position on a San Francisco daily paper, and he was enjoying what was left of a three months' vacation in Ireland. And three weeks of that scanty remainder

would be consumed in travelling back to his duty. All these reflections entered into the young man's sigh and gave it a touch of pathos.

"Well, I won't go any farther," said Dr. Lynn, halting at the boundary wall, spanned by a ladder-like flight of wooden steps which connected the churchyard with the little by-road. "I'll say good evening, Gerald, and assure you I appreciate your kindness in coming over to spend a long day with a stupid old man."

"I would not hear thine enemy say that," quoted Gerald with a light laugh. "I hope to spend many another day as pleasantly before I turn my back on old Ireland." He ran up the steps as he spoke, and stood on the top of the wall looking back to wave a last greeting before he descended. Suddenly he stopped.

"What's that?" he asked, pointing down among the graves.

The rector turned, but the tall grass and taller nettles concealed from him the object, whatever it might be, which Gerald had seen from his temporary elevation.

"It looks like a coffin;" and coming rapidly down again the young man pushed his way through the rank growth. The clergyman followed.

In a little depression between the mounds of two graves lay a plain coffin of stained wood. It was closed, and an attempt to move it showed that it was not empty. A nearer inspection revealed that the lid was not screwed down in the usual manner, but hastily fastened with nails. Dr. Lynn and Gerald looked at each other. There was something mysterious in the presence of this coffin above ground.

"Has there been a funeral—interrupted—or anything of that kind?" asked Gerald.

"Nothing of the sort. I wish Bolan were here. He might have something to say about it."

Bolan was the sexton. Gerald knew where he lived—within a stone's throw of the spot—and volunteered to fetch him. Dr. Lynn looked all over the sinister black box, but no plate or mark of any kind rewarded his search. Meanwhile young Ffrench sped along the lower road to Bolan's house.

The sexton was in, just preparing for a smoke in company with the local blacksmith, when Gerald entered with the news of the uncanny discovery in the churchyard. Eleven young Bolans, grouped around the turf-fire, drank in the intelligence and instantly scattered to spread the report in eleven

different directions. A tale confided to the Bolan household was confided to rumor.

Blacksmith and sexton rose together and accompanied Gerald to the spot where he had left Dr. Lynn, but Dr. Lynn was no longer alone. The rector had heard steps in the road; it was a constabulary patrol on its round, and the old gentleman's hail had brought two policemen to his side. There they stood, profoundly puzzled and completely in the dark, except for the light given by their bull's-eye lanterns. But the glare of these lanterns had been seen from the road. Some people shunned them, as lights in a graveyard should always be shunned; but others, hearing voices, had suffered their curiosity to overcome their misgivings, and were gathered around, silent, open-mouthed, wondering. So stood the group when Gerald and his companions joined it.

In reply to general questions Bolan was dumb. In reply to particular interrogations, he did not hesitate to admit that he was "clane bate." Gerald, seeing that no one had ventured to touch the grim casket, hinted that it would be well to open it. The crowd, which had been mostly collected by the young Bolans, not finding such a feast of horror as the highly-colored narratives of the sex-

ton's family had led it to expect, appeared to favor the suggestion. There was a dubious murmur and a glance at the constables as the visible representatives of the powers that be. The officers tightened their belts and seemed undecided, and Dr. Lynn took the lead with a clear, distinct order. "Take off the lid, Andy," he said.

"An' why not? Isn't his riverince a magistrate? Go in, Andy, yer sowl ye, and off wid it." Thus the crowd.

So encouraged, the blacksmith stepped forward. Without much difficulty he burst the insecure fastenings and removed the lid. The constables turned their bull's eyes on the inside of the coffin. The crowd pressed forward, Gerald in the front rank.

There was an occupant. A young girl, white with the pallor of death, lay under the light of the lanterns. The face was as placid and composed as if she had just fallen asleep, and it was a handsome face, with regular features and strongly defined black eyebrows. The form was fully dressed, and the clothes seemed expensive and fashionable. A few raven locks straggled out from beneath a lace scarf, which was tied around the head. The hands crossed beneath the breast were neatly gloved.

There she lay, a mystery, for not one of those present had ever seen her face before.

Murmurs of wonder and sympathy went up from the by-standers. "Ah, the poor thing!" "Isn't she purty!" "So young, too!" "Musha, it's the beautiful angel she is be this time."

"Does anyone know her?" asked the rector; and then, as there was no reply, he put a question that was destined for many a day to agitate the neighborhood of Drim and ring through the length and breadth of Ireland: "How did she come here?"

The investigation made at the moment was unsatisfactory. The grass on all sides had by this time been trampled and pressed down by the curious throng, and such tracks as the coffin-bearers had made were completely obliterated. It was clearly a case for investigation by the coroner, and when that official arrived and took charge, the crowd slowly dispersed.

Gerald walked home immersed in thought. He was late for dinner at Ballyvore Park, and his brother and sister plied him with questions when he explained the cause of his delay. But he could not hazard even a conjecture in the way of explanation. A dead girl had been found, and no one,

neither Dr. Lynn nor any one else, could tell who she was or whence she came.

The inquest furnished no new light. Medical testimony swept away the theory of murder, for death was proved to have resulted from organic disease of the heart. The coffin might have been found at any time within thirty-six hours, for it could not be shown that anyone had crossed the churchyard path since the morning previous; indeed, a dozen might have passed that way without seeing that which Gerald had only discovered through the accident of having looked back at the moment that he mounted the wall. Still, it did not seem likely that an object of such size could have lain long unnoticed, and the doctors were of opinion that the woman had been alive twenty-four hours before her body was found.

In the absence of suspicion of any crime—and the medical examination furnished none—interest centred in the question of identity; and this was sufficiently puzzling.

The story got into the newspapers—into the Dublin papers—afterward into the great London journals, and was widely discussed under the title of “The Drim Churchyard Mystery,” but all this publicity and a thorough investigation of the few

available clues led to nothing—no one was missing ; widely-distributed photographs of the deceased found no recognition, and the quest was finally abandoned, even in the immediate neighborhood. The unknown slept beneath the very sod on which they had found her.

Gerald Ffrench, who, like most good journalists, had a strongly-developed detective instinct, alone kept the mystery in mind, and worked at it incessantly. He devoted the few remaining weeks of his stay in Ireland to a patient, systematic inquiry, starting from the clews that had developed at the inquest. He had provided himself with a good photograph of the dead girl, and a minute, carefully-written description of her apparel, from the lace scarf which had been wound round her head, to the dainty little French boots on her feet. These last were Brussels-made, and stamped with the maker's name. The jacket had come from a London furrier, and the dress—a plain black silk, but of fashionable cut, and expensively trimmed—was from one of the great Paris shops—the Magasin du Louvre. The first examination had exhausted all these sources of information without result. None of the tradesmen in the three capitals indicated could remember to whom they had sold these articles, especially as it

was impossible to furnish an approximate limit of time. Railway officials and hotel-keepers, supplied with the photographs, could not say that they had ever seen the original in life. Even the coffin—a cheap, ready-made affair—could be traced to no local dealer in such wares. A chatelaine bag, slung around the waist of the dead girl, had evidently been marked with initials, for the leather showed the holes in which the letters had been fastened, and the traces of the knife employed in their hurried removal. But the pretty feminine trifle was empty now, and in its present condition had nothing to suggest, save that a determined effort had been made to hide the identity of the dead. The linen on the corpse was new and of good material, but utterly without mark. Only a handkerchief, which was found in the pocket, bore a coat-of-arms exquisitely embroidered in the corner. The shield was covered with a particular pattern in blue and white, on which were three ornamental crosses in gold, and above was displayed the head and shoulders of a knight as a crest. Gerald, whose smattering of heraldry told him so much, could not be sure that the lines of the embroidery properly indicated the colors of the shield, but he was sanguine that a device so unusual would be recognized by the

learned in such matters ; and, having carefully sketched it, he sent a copy to the Herald's College, preserving the original drawing for his own use. The handkerchief itself, with the other things found on the body, was, of course, beyond his reach.

While awaiting an answer from the Herald's College, young Ffrench was by no means idle. His brother's dog-cart was at his service, and, in company with Larry, the groom, the young man made an active canvass of the neighborhood. He was far from satisfied with the way the local authorities had gone to work. In matters beyond his scope—in the inquiries that had been made in distant cities—he was content to take the information thus obtained, but it was not in this direction he looked to find his clue. He built great hopes on the embroidered handkerchief, and was astonished when the coroner pooh-poohed it as a means of identification. He also thought that the search for the undertaker, who had supplied the last shelter for the beautiful dead, had been too lightly given over. He had a theory, of course ; what detective, professional or amateur, ever started on a quest without one ? Gerald's theory was that the girl had died suddenly, and her companions, probably foreigners, ignorant of the laws of the country and un-

willing to be embarrassed by them, had procured a coffin, and left the deceased for burial at the nearest graveyard. This would argue that the woman had died somewhere in the immediate vicinity, and it was on this hypothesis that Gerald was working. He considered that it would have been impossible to convey the body for any considerable distance, either by road or rail, without attracting attention, and he could imagine no possible reason why anyone should have attempted so troublesome a task. If she had met a violent death, it might be another matter; but testimony at the inquest had been clear on that point.

And so Edward Ffrench's tall chestnut horse, Shan Van Vocht, whirled the light dog-cart over the muddy Westmeath roads most days during Gerald's last week or two in Ireland, and the young journalist had ample opportunity during these excursions to ponder over all the phases of his search in silence, or to discuss them with Larry, the groom.

But it all led to nothing. If the coffin had been procured in the vicinity, none of the local undertakers would admit the transaction, and Gerald was reduced to hope that the embroidery on the handkerchief might supply the missing clew, and he chafed inwardly as day after day went by with-

out bringing any answer from the Herald's College.

It came at last, not very long before the approaching close of his vacation forced him to leave Ireland. Gerald found the long-expected letter awaiting him on his return from one of his fruitless quests. Eagerly he tore it open, but what he read only seemed to make the mystery deeper.

The arms had been readily recognized from his sketch, and the college, in return for his fee, had furnished him with an illuminated drawing, showing that the embroidery had been accurate. The shield was "vair, three cross crosslets in bend, or." Crest, "a demi-knight ppr." Motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit." The bearings and cognizance were those of the noble family of Costello, which had left Ireland about the middle of the seventeenth century and had settled in Spain. The last representative had fallen some sixty years ago at the battle of Vitoria, in the Peninsular War, and the name was now extinct. So pronounced the unimpeachable authority of the Herald's College.

From this Gerald concluded that the handkerchief had been marked by some one accustomed to copy blazonries; he thought it likely that the work had been done in a French convent.

And yet he had seen those very arms embroidered on a handkerchief which had been found in the pocket of a nameless girl, whose corpse he himself had been the first to discover some two weeks before in the lonely little burying-ground at Drim. What was he to think? Through what strange, undreamed-of ramifications was this affair to be pursued.

A few days before the date fixed for his departure, Ffrench walked over to the Rectory to say good-bye to Dr. Lynn. The old gentleman had christened Gerald as a baby, had lectured him as a boy, and had been a good friend to him ever since, and the young man was not ungrateful. But this time his visit had an object beyond the ostensible one of courtesy. Gerald knew that the rector was an authority on county history, and thought it possible that the old gentleman could tell him something about the Costellos, a name linked with many a Westmeath tradition. He was not disappointed, and the mystery he was investigating took a new interest from what he heard. The Costello had been one of the midland chieftains in Cromwell's time; the clan had offered the most determined resistance, and it had been extirpated, root and branch, by the Protector. The estate of Ballyvore had once

formed portion of the Costello property, and had been purchased by Gerald's ancestor from the Cromwellian Puritan to whom it had been granted on confiscation.

The young man was now deeply interested in the inquiry, and to it he determined to devote every moment of the time he could still call his own.

But the last week of the young journalist's visit home slipped away without result, and one fine morning Larry drove him into Athlone to take the train for Queenstown.

"Ye'll not be lettin' another six years go by without comin' home agen, will ye, sir?" said the groom, who was really concerned at Gerald's departure.

"I don't know," answered Gerald; "it all depends. Say, Larry!"

"Sir!"

"Keep an eye out, and if anything turns up about that dead girl let me know, won't you?" Ffrench had already made a similar request of his brother, but he was determined to leave no chance untried.

"An' are ye thinkin' o' that yet, an' you goin' to America?" asked Larry, with admiring wonder.

"Of course I'm thinking of it. I can't get it out of my head," said Gerald, impatiently.

"Well, well, d'ye mind that, now?" remarked the groom, meditatively. "Well, sir, if anything does turn up, I'll let ye know, never fear; but sure she's under ground now, an' if we'd been goin' to larn anything about the matter we'd ha' had it weeks ago."

Gerald shook hands with the faithful Larry at parting, and left a sovereign in his palm.

The groom watched the train moving slowly out of the station, then he spun the coin in the air, caught it, and spat on it "for luck," as he explained to himself. When the train was out of sight, he climbed back into the dog-cart and shook the reins over Shan Van Vocht's chestnut back.

"It's a mortal pity to see a fine young jintleman like that so far gone in love with a dead girl."

This was Larry's comment on his young master's detective tastes.

Meanwhile Gerald Ffrench, speeding southward through the varied scenery of Munster, was taking himself seriously to task.

"I must drop all this nonsense," he reflected, "or I won't be fit for work again when I get back. It is a mystery, and it has baffled me. Well, lots of mysteries are never solved, and I suppose this will be one of them. I must think of something else.

I wonder if the 'Frisco boys will be glad to see me when I turn up again ;" and so, being in a smoking carriage, he lit his pipe, and gradually forced his mind into other channels.

At Queenstown he bought a paper and looked over it while the tender was carrying him—in company with many a weeping emigrant—to the great steamer out in the bay. From time to time the journals still contained references to the subject which was uppermost in Gerald's thoughts. The familiar words, "The Drim Churchyard Mystery" caught his eye, and he read a brief paragraph, which had nothing to say except that all investigations had failed to throw any light on the strange business.

"Ay, and will fail," mused Ffrench as the tender came alongside the steamer, "at any rate, if anything is found out it won't be by me, for I shall be in California, and I can scarcely run across any clews there."

And yet, as Gerald paced the deck and watched the bleak shores of Cork fading in the distance, his thoughts were full of the banished Costellos, and he wondered with what eyes those exiles had looked their last on the old Head of Kinsale a quarter of a millennium ago. Those fierce chieftains,

to whom the Ffrenches, proud county family as they esteemed themselves, were but as mushrooms ; what lives had they lived, what deaths had they died, and how came their haughty cognizance, so well expressing its defiant motto, on the handkerchief of the nameless stranger who slept in Drim Churchyard—Drim, the old, old graveyard—Drim that had been fenced in as God's acre in the days of the Costellos themselves. Was it mere chance that had selected this spot as the last resting-place of one who bore the arms of the race ? Was it possible the girl had shared the Costello blood ?

Gerald glanced over his letter from the Herald's College and shook his head. The family had been extinct for more than sixty years.

II.

GERALD FFRENCH went back into harness on his arrival in San Francisco more readily than he had anticipated. He liked his work and returned to it refreshed from his three months' vacation. He found it easy to relegate the jolly days in hunting-field or at cover-side to their proper place in his life—mere pleasant memories to be talked over with the companions of the hour of idleness and

dismissed at the call of duty. It was more difficult to banish recollections of Drim churchyard and what he had found there, and this subject, though Gerald kept it to himself, was often present in his thoughts, and filled much of his leisure time with the purposeless speculation it engendered. Purposeless, because he had exhausted conjecture during the long journey over ocean and continent, and there was scarcely a theory, possible or impossible, which he had not mentally tested and dismissed. Still the grim riddle and its hidden solution exercised a fascination upon the young man which he strove in vain to resist. Often, in the solitude of his own room, he would enliven the pipe he was accustomed to smoke before retiring by producing from his desk the only tangible evidence which this baffling case had left in his hands—the photograph of the dead girl and the illuminated shield he had received from the Herald's College. These he would lay before him, while he went step by step over the whole of the strange story with which they were connected. He opened every letter that he received from home with a vague hope that something new might have come to light. But there was never even a reference to the mystery. The whole matter had evidently dropped from the gossip of the

country side, and the old burying-ground at Drim shrouded its secret well.

About two months after Gerald's return to California a despatch was received from the "Evening Mail's" regular correspondent in Marysville, relating the particulars of an encounter between the Mexican holders of a large ranch in Yuba County and certain American land-grabbers, who had set up a claim to a portion of the estate. The matter was in course of adjudication in the Marysville courts, but the claimants, impatient at the slow process of the law, had endeavored to seize the disputed land by force. Shots had been fired, blood had been spilled, and the whole affair added nothing to Yuba County's reputation for law and order. The matter created some talk in San Francisco, and the "Evening Mail," among other papers, expressed its opinion in one of those trenchant personal articles which are the spice of Western journalism. Two or three days later, when the incident had been almost forgotten in the office, the city editor sent for Gerald Ffrench.

"Ffrench," said that gentleman as the young man approached his desk, "I've just received a letter from Don Miguel y—y— something or other. I can't read his whole name, and it don't much matter. It's Vincenza, you know, the owner of that

ranch where they had the shooting scrape the other day. He is anxious to make a statement of the matter for publication, and has come down to the Bay on purpose. Suppose you go and see what he has to say? He's staying at the Lick."

The same morning Gerald sent up his card, and was ushered into the apartment of Don Miguel Vincenza, at the Lick House.

The Señor was a young man, not much older than Gerald himself. He had the appearance and manners of a gentleman, as French quickly discovered, and he spoke fluent, well-chosen English with scarcely a trace of accent, a circumstance for which the interviewer felt he could not be sufficiently grateful.

"Ah, you are from the 'Evening Mail,'" said the young Spaniard, rising as Gerald entered; "most kind of you to come, and to come so promptly. Won't you be seated? Try a cigar? No? You'll excuse me if I light a cigarette. I want to make myself clear, and I'm always clearest when I'm in a cloud." He gave a little laugh, and with one twirl of his slender fingers he converted a morsel of tissue paper and a pinch of tobacco into a compact roll, which he lighted and exhausted in half a dozen puffs, as he spoke.

"This man—this Jenkinson's claim is perfectly preposterous," he began, "but I won't go into that. The matter is before the courts. What I want to give you is a true statement of that unfortunate affair at the ranch ; with which I beg you to believe I had nothing whatever to do."

Señor Vincenza's tale might have had the merit of truth ; it certainly lacked that of brevity. He talked on—rolling a fresh cigarette at every second sentence—and Gerald made notes of such points as he considered important, but at the conclusion of the Spaniard's statement the journalist could not see that it differed from the published accounts, and he told the other as much.

"Well, you see," said Vincenza, "I am in a delicate position. It is not as if I were acting for myself. I am only my sister's agent—my half-sister's I should say—poor little Catalina—" and the speaker broke off with a sigh and rolled a fresh cigarette before he resumed. "It's her property, all of it, and I cannot bear to have her misrepresented in any way."

"I understand," said Gerald making a note of the fact. "The property, I suppose, passed to your sister from—"

"From her father. I was in the land of the liv-

ing some years before he met, and wooed, and won my widowed mother. They are both dead now and Catalina has none but myself to look out for her—except distant relatives on the father's side, who will inherit the property if she dies unmarried and whom she cordially detests."

Gerald was not particularly romantic, but the idea of this fair young Spaniard, owner of one of the finest ranches in Yuba County, unmarried, and handsome, too, if she were anything like her brother, inflamed his imagination a little. He shook hands cordially with the young man, as he rose to go, and could not help wishing they were better acquainted.

"You may be sure I will publish your statement exactly as you have given it to me, and as fully as possible," said Gerald. Before the young heirless had been mentioned the journalist had scarcely seen material enough in the interview for a paragraph.

It is fair to presume that Señor Vincenza was satisfied with the treatment he received in the "Evening Mail," for a polite note conveyed to French the expression of his thanks.

So that incident passed into the limbo of forgetfulness, though Gerald afterward took more interest in the newspaper paragraphs, often scant

enough, which told of the progress of the great land case in the Marysville courts.

A curt despatch, worded with that exasperating brevity which is a peculiarity of all but the most important telegrams, wound up the matter with an announcement that a decision had been reached in favor of the defendant, and that Mr. Isaac Hall, of the law firm of Hall & McGowan, had returned to San Francisco, having conducted the case to a successful issue. Gerald was pleased to hear that the young lady had been sustained in her rights, and determined to interview Mr. Hall, with whom he was well acquainted. Accordingly, after two or three unsuccessful attempts, he managed to catch the busy lawyer with half an hour's spare time on his hands, and well enough disposed to welcome his young friend.

"Mr. Hall," said Gerald, dropping into the spare chair in the attorney's private room, "I want to ask you a few questions about that Marysville land case."

"Fire ahead, my boy; I can give you twenty minutes," answered the lawyer, who was disposed to make a great deal more of the victory he had won than the newspapers had hitherto done, and who was consequently by no means averse from an interview. "What do you want to know?"

"Hard fight, wasn't it?" began the journalist.

"Yes," replied Mr. Hall, "tough in a way; but we had right on our side as well as possession. A good lawyer ought always to win when he has those; to beat law and facts and everything else is harder scratching; though I've done that too," and the old gentleman chuckled as if well satisfied with himself.

"That's what your opponents had to do here, I suppose," remarked Gerald, echoing the other's laugh.

"Pretty much, only they didn't do it," said the lawyer.

"I met Vincenza when he was down last month," pursued Gerald. "He seems a decentish sort of a fellow for a greaser."

"He's no greaser; he's a pure-blooded Castilian, and very much of the gentleman," answered Hall.

"So I found him," assented Gerald. "I only used the 'greaser' as a generic term. He talks English as well as I do."

"That's a great compliment from an Irishman," observed Mr. Hall, with another chuckle.

"I suppose the sister's just as nice in her own way," went on Gerald, seeing an opportunity to satisfy a certain curiosity he had felt about the

heiress since he first heard of her existence. "Did she make a good witness?"

"Who? What sister? What the deuce are you talking about?" asked the lawyer.

"Why, Vincenza's sister, half-sister, whatever she is. I understood from him that she was the real owner of the property."

"Oh, ay, to be sure," said Mr. Hall, slowly; "these details escape one. Vincenza was my client; he acts for the girl under power of attorney, and really her name has hardly come up since the very beginning of the case."

"You didn't see her, then?" asked Gerald, conscious of a vague sense of disappointment.

"See her!" repeated the lawyer. "No; how could I? She's in Europe for educational advantages; at a convent somewhere, I believe."

"Oh," exclaimed Gerald, "a child, is she? I had fancied, I don't know why, that she was a grown-up young lady."

"I couldn't tell you what her age is, but it must be over twenty-one, or she couldn't have executed the power of attorney; and that was looked into at the start, and found to be quite regular."

"Rather late in the day to be going in for education, isn't it?" remarked Gerald.

"Not at all," answered the lawyer. "What opportunities could she have had in Yuba County? Indeed, now I think of it, the girl must be about two-and-twenty, for they went to Europe last year, and she waited till she was of age and able to arrange her affairs personally before she would start."

"I see," said Gerald, slowly; but the topic had started Mr. Hall on a fresh trail, and he broke in:

"And precious they must have arranged them. Do you know we came within an ace of losing, all through their confounded careless way of keeping their papers?"

"How did they keep them?" inquired Gerald, listlessly. The suit appeared to be a commonplace one, and the young man's interest began to wane.

"They didn't keep them at all," exclaimed Mr. Hall, indignantly. "Fancy, the original deed—the old Spanish grant—the very keystone of our case, was not to be found till the last moment, and then only by the merest accident; and where do you suppose it was?"

"I haven't an idea," replied Gerald, stifling a yawn.

"At the back of an old print of the Madonna. It had been framed and hung up, as an ornament, I suppose, heaven knows when; and by and by some smart Aleck came along and thought the Mother

and Child superior as a work of art, and slapped it into the frame over the deed, and there it has hung for ten years, anyhow."

"That's really very curious," said Gerald, whose attention began to revive as he saw a possible column to be compiled on the details of the case that had seemed so uninteresting to his contemporaries.

"Curious! I call it sinful—positively wicked," cried the old gentleman, wrathfully. "Just fancy \$200,000 hanging on the accident of finding a parchment in such a place as that."

"How did you happen to find it?" asked Gerald. "I should never have thought of looking for it there."

"No, nor any other sane man," sputtered the lawyer, irritated as he recalled the anxiety the missing deed had caused him. "It was found by accident, I tell you. Some blundering, awkward, heaven-guided servant knocked the picture down and broke the frame. The Madonna was removed, and the missing paper came to light."

"And that was the turning-point of the case? Very interesting, indeed," mused Gerald, who saw in the working out of this legal romance a bit of detective writing such as his soul loved. "I suppose they'll have sense enough to put it in a safer place next time."

"I will, you may bet your life. I've taken charge of all the family documents, and if they get away from me they'll do something that nothing's ever done before," and the old lawyer chuckled with renewed satisfaction as he pointed to the massive safe in a corner of the office.

"So the deed is there, is it?" asked Gerald, following Mr. Hall's eyes.

"Yes, it's there. A curious old document, too; one of the oldest grants I have ever come across. Would you like to see it?" and the lawyer rose and opened the safe.

It was a curious old document, drawn up in curious old Spanish, on an old, discolored piece of parchment. The body of the instrument was unintelligible to French, but down in one corner was something that riveted his attention in a moment, and seemed to make his heart stand still.

There was a signature in old-fashioned, angular hand-writing, "Roderiguez Costello y Ugarte," and opposite it a large, spreading seal. The impression showed a knight's head and shoulders in full armor, and below it the shield, vair, with three cross crosslets, or; and the motto:

"Nemo me impune lacessit."

Point for point the identical blazonry which Ffrench had received from the Herald's College in England; the shield that he had first seen embroidered on the dead girl's handkerchief at Drim.

"What's the matter with you? Didn't you ever see an old Spanish deed before, or has it any of the properties of a Medusa's head?" inquired Mr. Hall, noticing Gerald's start of amazement and intent scrutiny of the seal.

"I've seen these arms before," said the young man, slowly. "But the name——" he placed his finger on the signature. "Of course I knew Vincenza's name must be different from his half-sister's; but is that her's?"

"Ugarte? Yes," replied the lawyer, glancing at the parchment.

"I mean the whole name," and Gerald pointed again.

"Costello!" Mr. Hall gave the word its Spanish pronunciation—Costelyo—and it sounded strange and foreign in the young man's ears. "Costello, yes, I suppose so, but I don't try to keep track of more of these Spaniards' titles than is absolutely necessary."

"But Costello is an Irish name," said Gerald.

"Is it? You ought to know. Well, Costelyo's

Spanish ; and now, my dear boy, I must positively turn you out. I have just half an hour for my clerk to fill me full before I attend a reference."

Gerald went straight home without returning to the office. He unlocked his desk and took from it the two results of his first essay in detective craft. Silently he laid them side by side and scrutinized each closely in turn. The pale, set face of the beautiful dead, as reproduced by the photographer's art, told him nothing. He strove to trace some resemblance, to awaken some memory by long gazing at the passionless features, but it was in vain. Then he turned to the illuminated shield. Every line was familiar to him, and a glance sufficed. It was identical in all respects with the arms on the seal. Of this he had been already convinced, and his recollection had not betrayed him. Then he placed the two—the piteous photograph and the proud blazonry—in his pocket-book, and left the room. He went straight to the office of the "Evening Mail" and requested a week's leave of absence. This was obtained, not without some difficulty and a few sharp words ; but it was obtained, which was all French cared about. The same evening he took his place on the Sacramento train en route for Marysville.

III.

IT is a long eighteen miles from the capital of Yuba County to the village of San Luis, near which, as Gerald ascertained, the Ugarte ranch is situated. There was no public conveyance to the village, but Gerald found little difficulty in obtaining a team at a Marysville livery stable, pledging his word and his credentials as an "Evening Mail" correspondent for its safe return. With minute instructions as to his route, which resolved themselves into a direction to leave Marysville by the south and keep the straight track till it went no farther, he started. The drive, as a drive, was far from enjoyable. It was near the close of the long, dry California summer, and the red dust lay inches thick in the road, whirling up in blinding clouds under the horses' feet, and settling on the traveller's garments, in his hair, in his eyes, with an intrusive persistence. Every bush by the way bore on arid branches a burden of offensive particles. Gerald was compelled to cough the dust out of his throat and rub it from his eyes at least a dozen times for every mile of that weary journey, and the level red track stretched for six long leagues across the parched tule lands of Yuba.

It was growing dusk as young French drove into San Luis. The village consisted of a plaza—four rows of irregularly built houses, with wide intervals between them, all fronting on a large dusty square. The buildings were of wood, some painted a staring white, some displaying the natural tints of the discolored timber. There might have been two score of them in all. One, dignified by a broad veranda, was labelled “Hotel,” and, on the opposite side of the plaza, above a door, swung a rudely painted sign, representing two drunken men endeavoring to support one another, with the legend below, “Los Dos Amigos.” This was evidently the liquor shop of the place, for its windows were adorned with whiskey labels and brewery chromos. There was not much sign of life in the square; a few men lounged about or sat smoking on the sides of a large horse-trough which, surmounted by a pump, occupied the centre. They seemed indolent and indifferent, and took little notice of Gerald as he pulled up in a cloud of dust and tried to single out some one to question.

“Can you tell me whereabouts is the Ugarte ranch?” asked Gerald, choosing a man who stood, hands in pockets, leaning against the pump. “It’s somewhere near here, isn’t it?”

"'Pends on what yer call near," said the individual addressed, bringing one hand and a huge twist of tobacco into sight. He gnawed a piece from the mass and then cast a critical eye over Gerald's equipage. "Ye've come a right smart piece I'm thinking?"

"From Marysville," answered Ffrench.

"Ay, them plugs shows it," remarked the man, and relapsed into silence.

"Can't you tell me where the Ugarte ranch is?" repeated Gerald, after a moment's silence.

"Who'd yer wan ter see there? Vincenza?" asked the other.

It was at the tip of Gerald's tongue to tell the fellow to mind his own business, but he restrained himself.

"Yes, Vincenza," he answered.

"Wal, let's see! Yer take that there road running out by the corner, and keep the sun at yer back till yer get ter the foot of the mesa——"

"How far is it?" interrupted Gerald, to whom this elaborate direction suggested distance.

"Matter o' twelve miles," replied the other, indifferently.

Ffrench cast a look of despair at his weary horses. It was evidently impossible to take them much further, and besides, night was falling.

"Twelve miles!" he said. "I'll have to wait till to-morrow."

"Ay, do, stranger," cried the other, brightening up into a faint show of interest. "Put yer team up at the livery stable, get a shake-down for yourself at the hotel, and come over to Los Dos Amigos after supper. I'll scare yer up a game of monte, or somethin', to keep yer amoosed, or I'll bust trying."

Without committing himself to any acknowledgment of this hospitable proposition, Gerald drove slowly across the plaza toward the stable. A horsy looking young fellow, who stood before the entrance chewing a straw, came forward and, to Ffrench's intense astonishment, accosted him by name, and in the broad, familiar dialect of Western Leinster.

"May I never ate another bit if it isn't Masther Gerald Ffrench," he said. "Well, well, well, but it's good for sore eyes to see ye. Come out here, Steve, and take the team. Jump down, Masther Gerald, an' stretch yer legs a bit. It's kilt ye are entirely."

A swarthy little Mexican appeared as Gerald alighted and led the tired horses into the stable. Then the young journalist took a good look at the

man who seemed to know him so well, and endeavored, as the phrase goes, to "place him."

The face seemed familiar—a sharp, thin, close-shaven face, with small, gray eyes, and bushy, black brows, and about the cheeks and chin that peculiar blue tint which is the silent protest of a banished beard. He felt he had seen the man more than once, but where, or when, or under what circumstances he could not for the moment determine. The other did not leave him long in doubt.

"Ye don't mind me, yer honor, an' how wud ye? But I mind yerself well. Sure it's often I druv ye and Mr. Edward, too. I used to wurruk for Mr. Ross, o' Mullingar. I was Denny, the post-boy—Dennis Driscoll, yer honor; sure ye must know me."

"Oh, yes, to be sure; I remember," said Gerald, as recollection slowly dawned upon him. "But who'd have thought of finding you in a place like this? I didn't even know you had left Ross's stables."

"Six, sivin months ago, yer honor."

"And have you been here ever since? I hope you are doing well," asked Gerald.

"Iver since, sor; an' doin' finely, wid the blessin' o' God. I own that place," pointing to the stable, "an' four as good turnouts as ye'd ax to sit behind."

"I'm glad of it," cried Gerald, heartily. "I like to hear of the boys from the old neighborhood doing well."

"Won't ye step inside, sor, and thry a dhrop o' something? ye must be choked intirely wid the dust."

"I don't care if I do," answered Gerald. "I feel pretty much as if I'd swallowed a lime-kiln."

A minute later the two were seated in Denny's own particular room, where Gerald washed the dust from his throat with some capital bottled beer, while his host paid attention to a large demijohn, which contained, as he informed the journalist in an impressive whisper, "close on to a gallon o' the raal ould stuff."

"And how did you get such a start?" inquired Gerald, with some curiosity. "I didn't even know you were going to America, and I think you drove me once at least while I was at home last winter."

"I did, sor; an' it's little I thought o' goin' to Ameriky thin, an' as for this little contimptuous place, I'd niver heerd tell of it. It's a quare story."

"Suppose you tell it me," said Gerald, pouring out a fresh supply of beer.

The other held the demijohn in an affectionate

embrace, as though it were a valued friend, while he tilted a fair amount of whiskey into his glass.

"A quare story," repeated Denny; "an' if I was in ould Ireland, divil an open wud I open me mouth about it; but here, in these outlandish parts, what odds does it make? There was a foreign jintleman thravellin' in Ireland last winter"—

"Was his name Vincenza?" inquired Gerald, starting from his seat as the possibilities of the coming revelation were borne in upon him.

"That was his name," answered Denny, "though I didn't know it at the time. Is yer honor acquainted wid him?"

"Yes—no—I have met him," said Gerald, angry at himself at having allowed the exclamation to escape him. "But what has he to do with your being here?"

"Everything," answered Denny, with a grin. "He's a great rich jintleman an' owns all the land round here for moiles. He brot me up here wid him, an' bought me these turnouts an' set me up in business."

"That was very kind of him," commented Gerald; "it isn't every gentleman you drive does as much for you."

"It isn't ivery jintleman I dhrive puts as quare a

job on me as he done. Now, listen, Masther Gerald, an' tell me what ye think o' this." Denny moistened his lips with a few drops of the "ould stuff," cleared his throat, and proceeded. "The jintleman—Mr. Vincenza, as I know him to be now—was thravellin' wid his sister, as purty a young lady as iver I seen, an' they cum to Mullingar on the evenin' thrain from Dublin, last January it was. I was at the station wid Mr. Ross's close carriage, for it was a rainy night, waitin' for any fare I might pick up off o' the train. Mr. Vincenza comes up to me an' he sez, sez he, 'D'ye know where Drim is, me boy?' 'Why not, sir?' sez I, as why shouldn't I. Wid that he wint back and brot the young lady out o' the station. She was donny and wakely, it seemed, an' she kept a lanin' on his arrum. The two were colloquin' together in some foreign lingo I knew nothing about, but it was plain to be seen that she was hell-bent to go to Drim, an' he wanted to stay in Mullingar that night. Well, to mek a long story short, she had her way, and they got into the carriage, he helpin' her, for he was mighty tinder of her. I started an' druv along middlin' aisy, an' whin I was about a mile on t'other side o' Kinnegad I heerd some one callin' to me out o' the carriage, 'Stop, dhriver, stop!' so I pulled up and the jintle-

man opened the dure and got out. Sez he, 'Get down driver,' sez he, 'me sister's tuk very bad.' That's the way I come to know she was his sister. Before that I tuk thim for husban' an' wife. Well, she was mortal bad, surely—wake an' faint, an' roll-in' her eyes terrible. I'd unhooked wan o' the carriage lamps an' held it for light. Well, to mek a long story short, she died thin an' there, an' I was that scared I didn't know which side o' me was uppermost. The jintleman tuk on terrible, an' kissed her dead face, an' called her all sorts o' soft names in his foreign lingo. At last he straightens up, an' he sez to me, 'Dhriver,' sez he, 'this is a bad business.' 'Ye're right, sir, it is,' sez I. 'I was afraid of some-thin' like this,' sez he, 'she had heart disease an' it's killed her.' 'It's a mortal pity thin, sir,' sez I, for her face was as calm and peaceful as an angel's, an' she loked beautiful in the lamp-light. Wid that he fell to cryin' an' kissin' her agen, an' then he sez, sez he, 'D'ye know of any undertaker in the neighborhood where we cud git a coffin for the poor thing?' sez he. 'I do sir,' sez I; for I thought o' Fergus Farrell, just outside o' the town o' Kinnegad, not half a mile from where we was that minit."

"Fergus Farrell!" interrupted Gerald. "Did you get that coffin from him?"

"We did that, sor; from no one else."

"The confounded liar," muttered Ffrench, for the aforesaid Farrell was one of those whom he had cross-questioned in his canvass of the Westmeath undertakers; but Denny's story had reached an interesting point, so Gerald only spared time for a single malediction, and then urged the other to proceed.

"We found Farrell, sir, an', after a bit of a talk betune the foreign jintleman an' himself, a coffin was brot out an' the young lady was put in it. The jintleman tuk his knife an' ripped somethin' off the bag she wore at her side, and then Farrell nailed the coffin down. It 'ud do full as well, he said, an' it 'ud take a long time to screw it. Then the jintleman gave Fergus money—a whole fistful, o' notes—an' I thought it was a big price for a coffin, but I sed nothin'. They put it on the dhrivin sate, because they cudn't get it inside. I didn't like it much, but the jintleman sed I should be well ped—and so, you see, I was. 'Where to now, sir,' sez I. 'To Drim Churchyard,' sez he, an' off I went. I thought it was mighty quare, the whole thing, but it was the best o' me play to say nothin'. Whin we got to Drim, I druv in be the lower road; it was close onto midnight be that time, an' we lifted the coffin over the wall where the steps is, an' set it

among the grass a little back. Then the jintleman knelt down by it in the wet and done a little prayin', I judge, and he got up an' sez, 'She'll rest there where she wished to rest,' and then we went back to the carriage. 'Aren't ye goin' to bury her, sir,' sez I. 'No,' he sez, 'others must do that. I have no time,' an' wid that he climbed up on the box nixt to me, though it was pourin' rain. 'Back to Mullingar,' he sez, an' away we druv. Well, the whole way he was tellin' me what an' illegant place Ameriky is, an' how he was goin' straight back, an' wouldn't I like to come. There was no end to what he was goin' to do for me. He swore a big oath there was nothin' wrong in this night's wurruk, that he loved his sister better nor his life, an' that he'd done all he had done becace it was her last wish. Well, to mek a long story short, before we got to Mullingar I was hot to go back wid him to Ameriky. He said we must start at wanst, but that med no odds to me, for I'd none belongin' to me. Well, he got off at the railway station, an' towld me to come to him there as soon as I'd druv back the carriage; an' he ped a good price for his dhrive. Well, I guv in the carriage, and towld the masther that I was goin' away for a few days, an' then I kem to the station. We tuk the early mornin' thrain for Ath-

lone, an' from that down to Queenstown, where we caught the steamer the very same day. An' I'm doin' well here, an' have niver regritted comin'."

"A very curious story, indeed, Denny," said Gerald. "Do you remember what day of the week all this happened?"

"I do sir, for it was a Tuesday night we left the young lady in Drim, an' we tuk the Wednesday's steamer at Queenstown."

"So," reflected Gerald, "they were on the broad Atlantic when I saw the coffin among the grass that Wednesday evening."

"Denny," resumed Ffrench, after a short silence, during which he had written a few lines on his card, "couldn't your helper—what do you call him?"

"I call him Steve, sor, for short, but his real name is Stefano."

"Well, couldn't he ride over to the Ugarte ranch and give this card of mine to Señor Vincenza?"

"Why not, sor—but wait now. Ye're not goin' to tell Mr. Vincenza all I've towld ye, sor, for he's kept his wurrud be me, an' I'd ha kep mine be him an' niver whispered all this only, ye see, it was a quare thing, an' it bothered me, an' bein' as I have a great rispict for yer family, Mr. Ffrench an'——"

"Make your mind quite easy, Denny," said Ger-

ald. "You've done no harm in telling me this. As you say, it happened in Ireland and this is California. I came out on purpose to see Mr. Vincenza—here, I'll read you my card. All it says is, "Please come over to San Luis as soon as possible; most important business."

Half an hour later a mustang loped out of the square and vanished in a cloud of dust. Stefano was in the saddle and he carried Ffrench's card in his pocket.

Señor Vincenza appeared the following morning just as Gerald had finished breakfast. The ranchero remembered the representative of the "Evening Mail" and greeted him cordially, expressing his surprise at Gerald's presence in that part of the country. The Spaniard evidently imagined that this unexpected visit had some bearing on the recently decided law-suit, but the other's first words dispelled the illusion.

"Señor Vincenza," Ffrench said, "I have heard a very strange story about your sister, and I have come to ask you for an explanation of it."

The young Spaniard changed color and looked uneasily at the journalist. "What do you mean?" he asked. "I do not understand you. My sister is in Europe."

"Yes," answered Gerald, "she is in Europe—in Ireland—she fills a nameless grave in Drim Churchyard."

Vincenza leaped to his feet, and the cigarette he had lighted dropped from his fingers. They were in Gerald's room at the hotel, and the young man had placed his visitor so that the table was between them. He suspected that he might have to deal with a desperate man. Vincenza leaned over the narrow table, and his breath blew hot in Ffrench's face as he hissed: "Carrambo! What do you mean? How much do you know?"

"I know everything. I know how she died in the carriage on your way from Mullingar, how you purchased a coffin and bribed the Kinnegad undertaker to silence; how you laid her, in the dead of night, among the weeds in the graveyard; how you cut her name from the chatelaine bag, and did all in your power to hide her identity. Do you recognize that photograph; have you ever seen that coat of arms before?" and Ffrench drew the two cards from his pocket and offered them to Vincenza.

The Spaniard brushed them impatiently aside and crouched for a moment as if to spring. Gerald never took his eyes off him, and presently the other straightened up, and, sinking into the chair behind

him, attempted to roll a cigarette. But his hand trembled and half the tobacco was spilled on the floor.

"You know a great deal, Mr. Gerald Ffrench. Do you accuse me of my sister's murder?"

"No," answered Gerald. "She died from natural causes. But I do accuse you of fraudulently withholding this property from its rightful owners, and of acting on a 'power of attorney' which has been cancelled by the death of the giver."

There was a moment's silence, broken only by a muttered oath from Vincenza as he threw the unfinished cigarette to the ground, and began to roll another—this time with better success. It was not till it was fairly alight that he spoke again.

"Listen to me, young man," he said, "and then judge me as you hope to be judged hereafter—with mercy. My sister was very dear to me—I loved her—oh, God, how I loved her!" His voice broke and Gerald, recalling certain details in Denny's narrative, felt that the Spaniard was speaking the truth. It was nearly a minute before Vincenza recovered his self-command and resumed.

"Yes, we were very dear to each other; brought up as brother and sister, how could we fail to be? But her father never liked me, and he placed re-

strictions upon the fortune he left her so that it could never come to me. My mother—our mother—had died some years before. Well, Catalina was wealthy; I was a pauper, but that made no difference while she lived. We were as happy and fond a brother and sister as the sun ever shone upon. When she came of age she executed the ‘power of attorney’ that gave me the charge of her estate. She was anxious to spend a few years in Europe. I was to take her over, and, after we had travelled a little, she was to go to a convent in France and spend some time there, while I returned home. But she was one of the old Costellos, and she was anxious to visit the ancient home of her race. That was what brought us to Ireland.”

“I thought the Costello family was extinct,” observed Gerald.

“The European branch has been extinct since 1813, when Don Lopez Costello fell at Vitoria; but the younger branch, which settled in Mexico toward the end of the eighteenth century, survived until a few months ago; until Catalina’s death, in fact, for she was the last of the Costellos.”

“I see,” said Gerald. “Go on.”

“She was very proud of the name, poor Catalina, and she made me promise, in case anything hap-

pened to her while we were abroad, that she should be laid in the ancient grave of her race—in the churchyard of Drim. She had a weak heart, and she knew that she might die suddenly. I promised. And it was on our way to the spot she was so anxious to visit that death claimed her—only a few miles from the place where her ancestors had lived in the old days, and where all that remains of them has long moldered to dust. So you see, Mr. Ffrench, that I had no choice but to lay her there.”

“That is not the point,” insisted Gerald. “Why this secrecy? Why this flight? Dr. Lynn, I am sure, would have enabled you to obey your sister’s request in the full light of day—you need not have thrown her coffin on the ground, and left to strangers the task of doing for the poor girl the last duties of civilization.” Gerald spoke with indignant heat, for this looked to him like the cruelest desertion.

“I know how it must seem to you,” answered Vincenza, “and I have no excuse to offer for my conduct but this. My sister’s death would have given all she possessed to people whom she disliked. It would have thrown me, whom she loved, penniless on the world. I acted as if she was still living, and as I am sure she would have wished me to

act; no defence, I know, in your eyes; but consider the temptation."

"And did you not realize that all this must come out some day?" asked French.

"Yes, but not for several years. Indeed, I cannot imagine how you have stumbled on the truth."

And Gerald, remembering the extraordinary chain of circumstances which had led him to the root of the mystery, could not but acknowledge that, humanly speaking, Vincenza's confidence was justified.

"And now that you have found this out, what use do you intend to make of it?" asked the Spaniard, after a pause.

"I shall publish the whole story as soon as I return to San Francisco," answered Gerald, promptly.

"So, for a few hundred dollars, which is all that you can possibly get out of it, you will make a beggar of me?"

"Right is right," said the young Irishman. "This property does not belong to you?"

"Will you hold your tongue—or your pen—for \$50,000?" asked the Spaniard, eagerly.

"No, nor for every dollar you have in the world.

I don't approve of your practice, and I won't share your plunder. I am sorry for you personally, but I can't help that. I won't oust you. I will make such use of the story as any newspaper man would make, and so I give you fair warning. You may save yourself if you can."

"Then you do not intend to communicate with the heirs," began Vincenza, eagerly.

"I neither know nor care who they are," interrupted Gerald. "I am not a detective, save in the way of my profession, and I shall certainly not tell what I have discovered to any individual till I give it to the press."

"And that will be?" asked the Spaniard.

"As soon as I return to San Francisco," answered Ffrench; "it may appear in a week or less."

"Thank you, Señor: good morning," said Vincenza, rising and leaving the room.

Three days later Señor Miguel Vincenza sailed on the outgoing Pacific Mail Steamer, bound for Japan and China. He probably took a considerable sum of money with him, for the heirs of Catalina Costello y Ugarte found the affairs of the deceased in a very tangled state, and the ranch was mortgaged for nearly half its value.

Gerald Ffrench's story occupied four pages of the

next issue of the "Golden Fleece," and was widely copied and commented upon over two continents. Larry, the groom at Ballyvore, read the account in his favorite Westmeath "Sentinel," and, as he laid the paper down, exclaimed in wonder :

"Begob, he found her !"



UNDER THE REDWOOD TREE.

UNDER THE REDWOOD TREE.

“YES, you kin hev breakfast ; but about a team—wall, I’ll see.”

Thus spoke the clerk of the Eureka House, a young man of aggressive manners, whose stubbly black hair stood out from his head as if bristling defiance toward every point of the compass. He looked harassed, and had laid aside his coat. This might be the usual way of welcoming the coming guest in Humboldt County, but Gerald French did not appreciate it. He was fresh from twenty-four hours of an ocean not always so pacific as its name, and the floor seemed to heave under his feet like the deck of the little steamer that had brought him from San Francisco. He silently accepted the direction of the clerk’s finger and entered the dining-room.

The regular breakfast-hour at the Eureka House was past and the long table had been cleared off, except at the extreme end, where a little oasis of doubt-

ful tablecloth dotted with dishes relieved the barren expanse of stained redwood. Thither Gerald was marshalled by a communistic-looking waiter, who simplified the young gentleman's choice of viands by remarking, "There's beefsteak."

"Nothing else?" inquired Ffrench, dropping into his place with a half-bow to a gentleman already seated opposite.

"And coffee," said the waiter.

"Beefsteak and coffee be it," answered Gerald, seeking vainly for a napkin. Then, as he raised his eyes from the futile search, he became conscious that his fellow-guest was regarding him intently across the narrow table.

"You'll know me again if you see me, my friend," thought young Ffrench, and then, being little troubled with false modesty, he returned the stare with interest.

The other drummed lightly on the board with his knife and never wavered in his unwinking gaze. He was a big man, with broad shoulders and mighty chest; and if his length of limb were at all proportionate to his apparent height as he sat, his stature should be almost gigantic. A pair of blue eyes lighted up a shrewd, good-natured face, clean shaven except on the chin, whence depended a long auburn

beard. His age might have been fifty or more, and his costume was the most elaborate that Gerald had yet seen in Eureka; for not only did the stranger boast a white collar and a neck-ribbon, but a frock coat of black cloth was buttoned across his broad breast. There is something reassuring in a frock coat, especially on the outskirts of civilization. If it is not worn by a gambler it is pretty sure to be the property of a self-respecting man, and the garment in question, though of country cut and too wide for its wearer, big as he was, had its effect on the young traveller.

Finding this wordless communion of eyes growing intolerable, Gerald broke the silence with a casual remark suggested by the service of the hotel.

"You come in by the Pelican, I suppose?" said the big man, wholly ignoring young French's observation, and settling down, with obvious enjoyment, to a system of cross-examination.

Gerald admitted that he had so come.

"A great steamer the Pelican, entirely," resumed the other. "She was built for a blockade-runner, I suppose you know."

"I didn't know," answered the younger man; "but I should say she was quick enough and uncomfortable enough for anything."

"Comfort!" sniffed the big fellow, with an indescribable inflection of contempt. "But I suppose ye're used to it down the coast. You come from—eh?"

"I came from the bay yesterday," answered Gerald; and then, divining from the other's look of bewilderment that this description of the city of the Golden Gate might not be so all-sufficing in Northern California as in the southern counties, he added, "from San Francisco, you know."

"Oh, ay, Frisco! We don't know nothin' of any other bay here but Humboldt Bay, an' I was just wonderin' what kind o' fish you might be," said the stranger, breaking into a hearty jolly bass laugh that was pleasant to hear. He threw back his great head and showed every one of an enviable set of teeth as he roared at his own little joke with a simplicity that was not without its attraction. But at this moment the waiter entered, and the gentleman's mirth abruptly ceased. He seemed to case himself in a visible armor of dignity, as if ashamed that he had so unbent, and he addressed the attendant in his gruffest tones.

"That's the steak, eh? Very well. Now tell Partridge to bring my team around in twenty minutes."

"I will, Mr. Kearney," answered the waiter, slapping Gerald's portion down with a fine air of indifference and moving toward the door.

"Say!" Ffrench called after him. "Do you know if that clerk of yours has made up his mind if he can let me have something to drive to Tacara?"

The waiter evidently heard, for he looked back, but he left the room without condescending to reply. Gerald turned to his plate with a muttered oath and was conscious of a growing desire to kick somebody—that cub of a waiter, for instance. The coffee was vile and the steak utterly unmanageable. Ffrench enviously watched his neighbor gnawing placidly through the tough, leathery mass and drinking the liquid libel without a wry face. The young traveller was in anything but a good temper, and yet he could hardly help smiling as he noticed how comically the red beard wagged in unison with the regular motion of the big man's jaw. Presently the latter paused a moment.

"From Frisco, eh?" he remarked, slowly. "Now I wouldn't wonder if ye come up after ducks."

"Well, I didn't," retorted Gerald, snappishly. "There are plenty of ducks there."

"So there are, so there are," said Mr. Kearney, in the soothing tone he might have adopted to a frac-

tious child ; " but there ain't much except ducks here—ducks an' redwoods."

" Perhaps I came after the redwoods," replied Gerald, amused in spite of himself at the other's manner.

" Well, ye might. Goin' lumberin', eh ? "

" No. I'm a correspondent of the San Francisco ' Evening Mail,' and I've come here to write up the lumber industry."

" So, a correspondent," Mr. Kearney pronounced the word as if the young journalist had been implicated in divorce proceedings,—“ a correspondent ; an' ye want to go to Tacara ? ”

" Yes, if I can get a team—or even an answer—in this hole," replied Ffrench, his indignation boiling to the surface again.

" Well, I'm goin', an' I'll drive ye over with pleasure."

" No ! will you really ? I'll be very much obliged," answered Gerald, eagerly.

" No obligation in life," returned the big man. " Ye're as welcome as the flowers in May ; an' as I'm in the lumber business there myself, maybe I can give you a few points will come in handy."

Ffrench expressed himself, as he felt, very grateful for this timely and unlooked-for kindness.

"Finish your food, then, an' we'll start," said Kearney, whose empty plate bore witness that he practised what he preached.

"Finish my food!" cried Gerald, hotly. "I've had all the leather I want for one morning."

"Ah, ye're used to comfort down the coast," remarked Mr. Kearney, meditatively, as he rose. Gerald, though above middle height, felt like a pigmy beside the big man as the latter dropped a great hand familiarly on his shoulder and half steered, half pushed him toward the door. Before they left the dining-room Kearney paused a moment.

"I've had comforts, too, an' like 'em," he said. "I was down to Frisco once an' dined at the Poodle Dog restoorant;" and with a chuckle at the recollection of a pleasant event in his life he passed out into the office.

Gerald paused a moment to pay for the breakfast he had not eaten, and the warlike clerk remarked, with ill-dissembled delight, that no team could be had till evening—"maybe not then."

Gerald did not attempt to disguise the satisfaction with which he retorted that if there were twenty teams he would not take one of them, and catching up his light valise he left the Eureka House. The clerk looked after him with a vindic-

tive expression, as if debating whether it was worth while to pursue and chastise the parting guest ; but seeing the young man take his place in Mr. Kearney's carriage, he subsided behind the counter, conscious that there was no prospect of another stranger till the next arrival of the Pelican, three days hence.

The stout road-wagon was drawn by a good-looking pair of American horses—in California so called as distinguished from mustangs—and they drove through Eureka at a rapid pace. Mr. Kearney pulled up at the outskirts of the town in front of a small general store.

"Catch on to them lines," he remarked, handing the reins to his companion ; "I'll keep ye no time waiting." And he swung his bulky form out of the wagon, which rebounded when relieved of his weight. With a single gigantic stride he crossed the narrow sidewalk and vanished in the shop. He reappeared after a brief interval with sundry packages in his hands and a small bundle of gaily painted toy balloons attached to his button-hole.

"D'ye know what them are for ?" he inquired as he set the team in motion.

"I should say you have some little folks at home," answered Gerald, smiling.

"I have a boy, sir," replied Kearney, beaming with delight. "The cutest little beggar in the State o' California, an' that's sayin' a big word. But sure what call have I to be talkin' about him? Won't you see him yourself?"

Gerald expressed the happiness he would feel at making the young gentleman's acquaintance.

"I don't know: ye come from Frisco, an' ye see more down there nor we do; but I'd back him agen any lad o' his age an' weight under the canopy; and as for learnin'—but there! Jimmy shall have every chance, so he shall. It isn't up here among the redwoods that I'm going to raise him."

"Fine country, though," remarked Gerald, looking around him. They were clear of the town by this time, and on a steep, miry road, which skirted the shores of the bay, making frequent turns to avoid the long "tide-waters" which ran up to the very foot of the wooded hills bordering the track to the right—tall, abrupt hills, clothed to their summits with the gigantic redwoods that make the wealth of Humboldt County.

It was a bright autumn morning, succeeding a week of almost incessant rain, and the atmosphere was so clear that the range of vision seemed limitless. The air was calm and still, but up among the

lofty forest tops there was an incessant trembling and rustling, as though a breeze were stirring there. At every turn of the road a little pond disclosed itself: none of the deeply shaded hollows seemed to be without one—some far off, sending a gleam of silver through the columned forest, others almost at the roadside, and not a few communicating with the tide-water. Wild-fowl of all kinds dotted the surface of these miniature lakes, or filled the air with their clangor as they rose, disturbed by the passing vehicle. Gerald thought he had never seen such a woodland landscape, and grew enthusiastic in its praise.

“It is fine,” admitted Kearney, letting his eye rove a moment over forest and water, and then bringing it back to the matter in hand—the care of his team over a road-bed as rough as the channel of a mountain torrent. “It is fine; but no place to rear a youngster, for all that.”

“Why not?” asked French.

“No eddication—whoa! gently there, my beauties—an’ I believe in eddication as I believe in lumber; there’s nothin’ in the world to beat it, if it’s sound.”

“You’re quite a philosopher, Mr. Kearney,” remarked Gerald.

The big man turned square round in his seat and looked his companion in the face.

"Am I labelled, or what's the matter with me that ye know me?" he asked.

"I heard the waiter at your most exclusive hotel address you by name," answered Gerald, laughing.

"It's none o' my hotel; if it were—well, since you're so wise, won't you make me as wise as yourself?"

"Certainly," said the journalist. "My name is Gerald Ffrench; very much at your service."

"Ffrench! Ye ought to be an Irishman by that," remarked Kearney.

"Certainly; I was born in the county Westmeath," replied the young man.

"D'ye mind that now? Give me yer hand, Mr. Ffrench. I'm always proud to meet a countryman in these out-o'-the-way parts."

"You're from the old country, then? I might have guessed as much."

"Well, you might," returned the other. "I'm from the townland o' Crogher, barony o' Maghara-felth, county o' Limerick, an' my name is Michael James Kearney, an' I've never been ashamed of any o' them. God save Ireland!"

As the conclusion of this speech seemed to be in

the nature of a doxology, Gerald did not feel called upon to make any reply, nor did his companion appear to expect one. Indeed, his whole attention was for the moment occupied by his horses, which, startled at the sudden appearance of a small boy from behind one of the giant redwood trunks, began to plunge and rear in a rather alarming manner.

"Stand still, Tom! Whoa, Jerry!" cried Kearney, quickly bringing the frightened team under subjection. Then he turned his attention to the immediate cause of the confusion.

"Well, Jimmy, is that yerself! Jump aboard, my boy, an' see what I've brought ye from Eureka."

"Hurrah! I see something anyway," answered Jimmy, whose sunburned features, beneath a shock of red hair, bore a curious resemblance to those of Mr. Kearney. The child, whose age might have been seven or eight, climbed into the wagon with the agility of a monkey, and immediately grasped at the little plump of balloons, which, to Gerald's intense though secret amusement, had danced and floated above Mr. Kearney's head all the way from Eureka.

"Have some behavior, Jimmy!" expostulated that gentleman in a bass whisper; "don't you see some one there?"

"Who is he, Dad?" inquired Jimmy, not the least abashed, and without taking the trouble to moderate his voice. "'Tisn't the new ox-hand, is it?"

"No, it's a gentleman," answered his father; and then, turning to Gerald with a smile, half-deprecating, half-embarrassed, and wholly winning, he added, "Ye see, I told ye this was no place to raise a boy."

"I think you've raised as fine a boy as I've clapped eyes on for many a day," rejoined Ffrench, heartily. "You'll take me round to-morrow and show me where I can get a shot at a duck, won't you, Jimmy?"

"I will; an' if Dad will let me, I think I can find you a bear," cried the youngster, eagerly.

This was more than Gerald had bargained for, but he contented himself with saying, "Oh, we'll look for the duck first;" and then added, as an after-thought, "but surely your father doesn't let you go where you'd meet such dangerous game?"

"Yes, he does, when he goes himself," answered young Nimrod. "There isn't much he doesn't let me do, anyhow."

There was something of apology in Mr. Kearney's tone as he hastened to explain his son's in-

dependence by his invariable formula, "You see, this ain't no place to raise a boy, anyhow."

The drive from Eureka had been long, though pleasant, and Gerald, arguing from the presence of the child that his destination was at hand, ventured to ask if it was much farther to Tacara. He was emboldened by observing that the road, which had run through a sylvan solitude for many miles, now showed occasional signs of life—a logger's hut peeped here and there from among the trees, a wreath of smoke curled up from the hillside, and occasionally the bark of a dog broke the silence as the wagon passed. But though not without circumstantial evidence of human habitation, the region seemed to Gerald as wild and desolate as ever. Therefore he was the more surprised at Mr. Kearney's answer.

"Tacara! We passed through it ten minutes ago."

Gerald gasped:

"Those cabins and——"

"Yes, that's all the Tacara there is to it."

"Where am I going then?"

"Home with me, I hope," said Mr. Kearney, heartily; "and if ye can enjoy yerself as I'd like to have ye, it's not very soon ye'll be wantin' to leave me."

Here was a hearty invitation, most opportunely extended. Gerald was glad to accept it in the spirit in which it was offered, the more so as he had gathered that Mr. Kearney was the great lumber dealer of the district, and in fact the founder and maintainer of Tacara. From no such point of vantage as Kearney's house could the journalist have hoped to study the staple of Humboldt.

The team drew up before a spacious, substantial residence, built of wood, indeed, as was every house within a circuit of fifty miles, but well finished, with glazed windows and shingled roof, and offering plain evidence of comfort. French attempted a few words of modest disclaimer before entering, but Mr. Kearney cut him short.

"What nonsense ye're talking! Ye've come out here to write up the redwoods; where better could ye go than into the thick o' them? Ye'll see little and hear nothin' else; an' as for the trouble—what trouble? It's glad I am to have a countryman an' a man of eddication to talk to; an' come in with ye without another word."

Gerald found himself in a low, square hall, panelled in unstained timber of the country, and communicating with the rest of the house by doors of the same material. The evening was chilly, and a fire

of logs was burning brightly. The floor was covered with the skins of bear and of several species of wildcat. Half a dozen rifles and shot-guns depended from a rack on the wall. It was a comfortable apartment, and as the tired traveller seated himself and stretched his toes toward the welcome blaze he could not but acknowledge that his lines had fallen in pleasant places.

Presently Jimmy reappeared. He had insisted on accompanying the man who had driven the team to the stable, and he came back full of the exuberant life of youth and perfect health. He was anxious to pilot Gerald forth before dark in search of a duck, but to this the young man would in no wise consent. He preferred to sit by the fire and chat with his host, whom he found a singularly well-informed man, allowing for the limitations his secluded life had imposed. With every detail of lumbering he was naturally familiar ; and as this was the subject of conversation, Gerald was perhaps inclined to give him credit for more intelligence than he really possessed. The correspondent's notebook was called into frequent use ; he learned all the history of the great trees from the moment they were attacked with saws and axes on their lonely hillsides, till, having been dragged down by

yokes of oxen from their steep fastnesses, one log at a time, they were passed through the saw-mill on the level or floated down the nearest tide-water to the bay.

Presently a substantial supper made its appearance—quail, wild duck, and the remains of a cold rabbit-pie, flanked by a large wheaten loaf and a jug of capital cider. As soon as full justice had been done to these good things the host produced pipes and a bottle of whiskey, and over these the interview was concluded, to Gerald's pleasure and profit. Mr. Kearney as he rose invited the young man to visit the saw-mill on the following morning.

"Ye'll have a walk through two or three mile o' redwood forest to get there," said the big man, "an' that's an experience worth havin' ; an there ye can see how the cattle start some o' them big logs down to tide-water, an'—an'—in fact, ye'll have lots to see, an' I won't ask no better fun than showin' ye. An' now good-night to ye, for the sun never sees me in bed any mornin' barrin' Sunday."

Gerald's room was small but well ventilated and scrupulously clean, and his bed was comfortable enough to wring from him a sigh at leaving it when his host thundered at the door and a gray misty light struggling through an eastern window

showed that the day was at hand. A hearty breakfast, accompanied by better coffee than young Ffrench had expected to find so far from civilization, occupied half an hour or so, and the sun had fairly risen when they stepped out under the redwoods.

Gerald never forgot that morning walk. The redwood forest has little or no underbrush, and the giant trunks rise sheer from the ground, unmarred by branch or twig, till, spreading out a hundred feet overhead, they meet to create the twilight of the grove. The two men moved on amid a solitude that seemed unbroken since the world began ; their steps were noiseless on the soft carpet of pine-needles, shed during uncounted ages from the giants above them. The pillared vistas extended on all sides, sombre, silent, awe-inspiring. Ffrench felt as if he were traversing the aisles of some cathedral, but incomparably older, vaster, grander than any built by man's hands. A faint murmurous sound—a sound that seemed the accompaniment of silence—stole down from spreading boughs whose form and direction were lost in their own gloom and distance. Despite the deep calm that weighed on all below, a breeze was stirring in the tops of the redwoods.

Gerald roused himself with an impatient start. He was growing sentimental, and stanzas of the "Talking Oak" flitted vaguely through his mind and strove to adapt themselves to those "giant boles," whose circumference he could scarce have measured in a dozen paces. He looked at his companion. Surely, in an experience of so many years, Mr. Kearney had outworn any emotions the forest was capable of inspiring in his broad breast.

Mr. Kearney was crushing the withered needles beneath his massive tread, and tracking his way unhesitatingly through a labyrinth that to Gerald seemed trackless. The black coat and the white collar that had been donned in honor of Eureka had given place to a stout flannel shirt, belted in at the waist ; and the big man looked the better for the change—more solid and business-like. He was glancing at the timber with a practical eye, occasionally pausing to rest his hand against one of the great trunks and to glance upward, as if to estimate how high it ran before branching. The young journalist mentally compared him to a butcher appraising the value of a likely beef before he ordered it slaughtered. Gerald loved fine timber, and he spoke with this feeling strong in him.

"It seems a sin and a shame to cut down such

trees," he said, with a touch of indignation in his voice.

Kearney turned and looked at him.

"Eh! That's the way it seems to you, I don't doubt. Look deeper, man, look deeper."

Gerald stared at him in astonishment, but Mr. Kearney went on.

"It's the destiny of every forest to be first cut down and then cut up for the use o' man. Which had the biggest share of honor—the trees that was left standin' in Tarshish, or them that was brought to Jerusalem to build Solomon's temple?"

Had Solomon himself in all his glory appeared in one of the dim arcades he could scarcely have surprised young French more than did this utterly unlooked-for reasoning in the man beside him.

"For see here now," pursued Kearney, having paused a moment for the answer that did not come; "this tree's a-growin' here an' has been for a thousand years, maybe two; no man knows till she's cut an' shows the rings in her. Down she comes to-morrow, we'll say, an' then what? Maybe this wood will floor a ball-room, an' be touched by pretty feet you'd sooner kiss nor the Pope's; maybe it'll build the house that the President of the United States'll be born in; maybe a bit of

it'll be the soundin'-board of a pulpit, an' echo God's word preached to the savin' of who knows how many souls. Isn't that better for it nor growin' an' rottin' an' shakin' pine-needles down on your head an' mine?"

By this time Gerald had found his tongue. "I had no idea you were so imaginative, Mr. Kearney," he said.

"I dunno as it's all imagination," answered Kearney. "Maybe it is : anyhow, it's possible, an' one thing's sure. Let this timber stand, an' never a foot but an Injun's will pass under its shadow ; cut it down, an' ye fill the bay with sails, ye put bread in men's mouths, an' ye give me the means o' doin' what I'm bound to do—makin' a man o' Jimmy such as his father never had the chance to be."

"You're right and I'm wrong," cried Gerald, somewhat touched by the earnest note in his host's voice as he uttered the last words. "They're fine trees ; but down with them, and make a ladder for your boy to climb as high as you'd like to see him."

Kearney grasped the young man's hand. "Thank ye, Mr. Ffrench. The boy 'll climb, an' he can't go too high to please me. His mother, God rest her ! was the best woman in the world, an' maybe she's left some o' her nature behind her with Jimmy."

"You have lost her, then?" said Gerald, softly. Somehow he felt drawn very close to this kind-hearted giant, and the dim, sibilant forest seemed a fitting place for an interchange of confidences.

"Ay, lost is the word," replied Kearney, bitterly. "She lies somewhere out yonder where no man will ever find her grave." He waved his arm with a broad gesture in the direction of the ocean. "Come on, Mr. Ffrench," he continued, without apparent pause. "Ye've many a new sight to see to-day, an' the saw-mill's the first o' them."

But when they reached the mill all was in confusion. A new ox-hand, engaged the day before, had yoked a score of oxen to a great log and started it down the hill on which it had been felled, as is the manner of Pacific coast lumbering. And an accident had befallen—not unheard of in its fashion, but generally horrible in its results. The load had moved freely, the ground being slippery from recent rain, till a steep grade was reached. Here it broke from control, and, gaining impetus as it slid down the hillside, the great log plunged among the oxen, killing and maiming more than half the team.

So much Kearney heard with comparative composure. It was an accident that had happened before, and was not always to be prevented by any

degree of care. He expressed pity for the poor oxen, and bit his lip as he cast up the pecuniary loss.

"Who did ye say was in charge?" he demanded presently.

"The new ox-hand—Jarl, they called him. He was a Norway man," answered the foreman.

"An' how did ye come to set a new hand to move a log out of any such awkward place as Oorah Hill?" asked Kearney, angrily.

"Wall, there weren't nobody else, and he was an old hand. He'd been lumbering in Mendocino," explained the foreman.

"An' where is he now? Let me say a word to him," cried Kearney, his temper evidently getting the better of him.

The foreman fell back a step and looked aghast. "Why, didn't you understand?" he said. "Jarl's dead; the log went over him and crushed him flatter'n a pancake."

An instant change came over the big man's face. "Holy St. Patrick! ye don't tell me," he gasped. "The poor fellow, the poor fellow! I wouldn't have had the like happen for—well, well, well! Mr. Ffrench," he added, turning to the journalist, who had been an interested listener, "I've been twenty

odd years in the lumber business, an' they call it a risky trade, but that's the first life I've ever lost among my men."

Gerald attempted a few words of sympathy, but Kearney did not seem to hear them. "Poor fellow, poor fellow!" he muttered. "Well, every man's time's got to come sooner or later, but that's the end o' my luck."

A low wailing cry, the voice of a child sobbing in the abandonment of sorrow, came from a shed on the right. Kearney started as he heard it and glanced nervously around.

"Whisht! D'ye hear that?" he asked. "Is there a child anywhere here, or is it the——" He paused as the piteous sob again cut the silence.

"It's the child, his little girl," said the foreman. "She's been taking on dreadful, and no wonder. He wasn't much to look at; but he was all she had, I reckon."

"His child—whose?" asked Kearney.

"Why, Jarl's, to be sure. She come up with him from Mendocino."

The big man sank down on a pile of shingles and buried his face in his hands.

"My God, my God! this is too much," he murmured. "Is it orphans I'm makin' in me ould

age?" Then he started to his feet and dashed his hat to the ground with a sweeping gesture. "To hell wid the oxen, to hell wid the lumber!" he shouted. "As for the poor Norway boy, there's a good God above that'll look out for him, but I'm goin' to see that this child won't be left an orphan. Where is she?"

He strode forward and entered the shed, Gerald keeping close behind him.

All that was mortal of the poor Norwegian lay on a long bench in one corner. The shockingly mangled form was covered with a blanket, but the face was unscathed, and death had been too sudden to leave much trace on the features. It was a commonplace face of the Scandinavian type—the face of a peasant.

A little girl, apparently about ten years old, was seated on a low stool at the dead man's side. She had flung her blue-checked apron over her head, and was moaning and rocking herself to and fro in an agony of grief. Very gently, very tenderly the big man stooped over the child and drew the apron away. She glanced up and checked her sobs—at first from astonishment at the sight of this great bearded stranger, but she soon seemed to recognize, with the intuitive welcome sorrow has for sympathy, that she was looking at a friend.

"That's right," said Kearney, soothingly. "Can ye speak English, honey?"

The little mourner nodded. Her blue eyes were brightening through their tears, and with an odd, womanly gesture she pushed the tangle of pale wheat-colored hair back from her temples. Kearney went down on one knee and lifted the girl on the other.

"What's yer name, darlint?" he whispered in a tone of indescribable gentleness. Gerald could not but notice how much more strongly marked was the man's Irish accent since this trouble had come upon him.

"Inga," answered the child.

"Well, Inga, will ye come home wid me? Ye can't do anythin' for poor dada," he hastened to add as her eyes turned toward the motionless figure on the bench. "Poor dada's gone to heaven, an' all that's to be done for him here I'll do."

He rose up to his full magnificent height, still holding the little girl in his arms and gathering her close to his breast.

"Let me kiss my father," pleaded Inga. Her speech had no trace of her foreign birth; indeed, it seemed likely she had first seen light in the New World.

"Why not?" said Mr. Kearney. His voice still kept its caressing tone and he did not set the child down, but held her so that she could press her lips to those of the dead man. Then he bent over the poor Norwegian and traced the sign of the cross on his forehead.

"I dunno what was his way o' thinkin'," he whispered, "but he'll be none the worse o' that anyhow."

Then, stooping his lofty head, Mr. Kearney passed the low door, crossed the mill-yard, where the hands all stopped to watch him, and so out into the dim, cool twilight of the forest, pressing the little orphan close to his breast.

Gerald was surprised at the impressible nature which his host showed, and forebore for a day or two to trouble him with the questions suggested by the strange, new life of the lumber-camp. But the big man's spirits recovered their tone very rapidly, and he exhibited the same mixture of boyish lightness, shrewd business thought, and queer, unexpected imagination that had captivated French in the first instance. The young man found himself greatly taken with Kearney, and if he was anxious to use the lumberman in the interest of the San Francisco "Evening Mail," that purpose was distinctly second to his admiration for Mr. Kearney's

character. Meanwhile Kearney himself lived on his hard-working, uneventful life. The introduction of little Inga into the household must have worked a greater change than Gerald was able to appreciate, but she was a quiet, unobtrusive child, and seemed content to spend her evenings looking up into Mr. Kearney's face with widely opened blue eyes, occasionally pushing back the masses of her pale golden hair with a quaint, old-fashioned gesture. She and little Jimmy were wonderful friends, and there was always a note of compassionate tenderness in Mr. Kearney's voice when he spoke to her. Probably he was more alive to the extent of the child's loss than she, better cared for now than ever in her life before, could possibly have been.

So passed a few days, and French collected many facts of interest to the lumber trade, and shot several ducks and quail and saw a black bear. He was fond of wandering in the gloom of the redwood forest with no companions but the children; and the strange, still atmosphere of the place, with the mysterious rustle of that ever-present breeze overhead, seemed to have a soothing effect even on Master Jimmy's effervescent spirits. As for Inga, whether it was due to her recent loss or was natural to her, she was always a quiet child.

The day after her father's funeral the little girl was even more silent than usual. She sat apart, weeping in corners, with her head in her hands and her tangled hair dropping unheeded over her face. Mr. Kearney checked Jimmy's rude play several times out of consideration to Inga's feelings, and the child soon retired, complaining of a headache.

The next morning Gerald, whose hours had ceased to be so early as those of the rest of the household, came upon Mr. Kearney, equipped in black coat and white collar, climbing into his wagon.

"Hullo! Where away now?" asked the young man.

"I'm goin' into Eureka," answered Kearney. "I'd ask ye to take a seat, only I've some one to bring back wid me. I'm goin' after the doctor."

"Is there any one ill?" inquired Gerald.

"N—no," said Kearney, slowly. "Anyway, I want the doctor to tell me whether there is or no. Inga was complainin' of a headache last night, an' she has a sore throat this mornin'. Get up, Tom; go along, Jerry!" And he drove off.

"Decidedly Kearney means to do his duty by the orphan," reflected Gerald, as he strolled under the redwoods. "It's well for her that it was in the employ of a man like that her father lost his life."

Mr. Kearney returned with the doctor in the afternoon, and Gerald, arriving late from the ponds with a good bag of wild ducks, perceived that something was amiss at the house. Little Jimmy, in evident spirits, was coming out of the door, followed by his father. The latter carried a small bag and an armful of blankets.

In a few words Mr. Kearney explained the state of affairs. Inga had scarlet fever, and it was thought better that Jimmy should sleep at the mill for the present.

"Is she very ill?" inquired Ffrench.

"No," answered Kearney. "The doctor says it's a very mild case."

"Where did she catch it?" asked the young man.

"Nobody knows. Down in Mendocino, where they come from, I suppose," answered the lumber dealer. "The doctor says it's a week, maybe two, since she was where the infection was."

Kearney looked pale and worried, but Master Jimmy, to whom the idea of sleeping at the mill had all the attraction of a picnic, seemed much elated.

Gerald turned, and accompanied them through the darkening shades of the forest.

"It's foolish I am, maybe," remarked Mr. Kearney as he walked home with Gerald after seeing

the boy made comfortable for the night, "but I can't help it. Sure Jimmy's all I have, an' I think the world o' him ; but this is a poor place to rear a lad."

Gerald represented that Jimmy would be far more exposed to infection in a city or in a great school than in a retired place like Tacara, but the father interrupted impatiently.

"It's not that I'm thinkin' of. We've took him away from the fever time enough, please God. It's not that ; it's his eddication. D' ye know, Mr. Ffrench, that with a fair start that boy has a better chance in life than I had—ay, or you, for all your Trinity College breeding ?"

"How so ?" asked Gerald.

"Because he was born in that house there under the redwoods," said the elder man proudly ; "because he was born a citizen of the sovereign State of California, and is eligible to be President of the United States, or will be in thirty-three years time."

Gerald forebore to remind the ambitious father that many thousands are born every year with the same eligibility, and Mr. Kearney repeated the words several times, rolling them on his tongue as if he savored them.

"President of the United States ! And why not ? Isn't he born eligible ?"

Little Inga made a good recovery. She was to all appearance a delicate child, yet the disease seemed to have taken no hold of her, and yielded quickly to Dr. Granby's skilful treatment. But the very day the orphan was officially pronounced convalescent Gerald met his host in the woods near the saw-mill, wandering bareheaded, tossing his arms aloft in extravagant gesticulation, and evidently a prey to the wildest excitement.

"Oh, don't talk to me, don't talk to me!" moaned the distracted man. "Jimmy's got the faver."

"No," said Gerald. "Oh, don't say that, Mr. Kearney. Are you sure?"

"The doctor's wid him now. He sent me out because I couldn't rest aisy."

Knowing how the poor fellow was wrapped up in his boy, Ffrench was fully able to appreciate his anxiety. The young man did his best to console and cheer his friend, and urged Jimmy's strong constitution and healthy life, but the father shook his head.

"It's the strongest that have it the worst. Look at that donny slip of a girl beyant, an' how she went through wid it."

Ffrench urged that this was hopeful, since the disease would seem to be mild in type; but Kearney could take little comfort from this argument.

"We'll see, we'll see," he said, and presently re-entered the mill. Gerald did not meet him again that day.

Poor Kearney's worst fears were realized. The infection that had touched the delicate girl so lightly laid firm hold on the sturdy lad, and day by day he grew worse. Dr. Granby, an old friend of the lumber dealer, almost lived at Tacara, and exhausted all that science could do in behalf of the little sufferer. All in vain! After an illness of five days Jimmy died about eleven o'clock on Monday morning.

All work had been suspended at the mill during the child's sickness, for it had been considered inexpedient to move him back to the house, and the noise of the great saws would have disturbed him. Gerald, who had done his share in nursing the little patient, was with him at the last, and so, of course, was his father, who had scarcely left the bedside or closed an eye during those five weary days. The old man—he had begun to show his years since Jimmy sickened—was holding the sufferer's hand and talking in a strain of soothing childish babble, when the doctor stepped forward and drew him away from the bedside. He followed his friend unresistingly, supposing that Dr. Granby had some

direction to give, but happening to glance back he realized the great change that had come upon the face of his boy. Then his grief had vent—passionate, unrestrained, violent. The whole nature of the man seemed altered. Gerald had known him as a decorous, kindly gentleman; he saw him now as a savage. Leaping back he seized the doctor by the collar and pinned him with gigantic force against the wall.

“Answer me, ye thafe, answer me before I shake the life out of ye! Why did ye kill me boy?”

Gerald sprung forward to the assistance of Dr. Granby, who really seemed for the moment in personal peril, but the doctor was equal to the occasion. Looking the frenzied man squarely in the eye, he said:

“Aren’t you ashamed of yourself, Michael Kearney, to show your black passion in the presence of the dead? I did my best for your boy, and you know it.”

The other relaxed his hold and glanced again at the bed. He pushed the doctor aside and flung himself across the little corpse with a howl of anguish that sounded scarcely human.

“Ah, Jimmy, me darlint, me beautiful boy—why did ye die, why did ye die? Ochone, ochone an’ wirasthru! where was ever the like o’ ye—so bould, so hearty, so full o’ sperits? It’s only a few hours

that ye were runnin' around wid twice the life in ye that ever I had—an' ye sò young, so clever, an' born wid such a grand start! Ah, why did ye die, why did ye die?"

Inexpressibly pained and shocked, Gerald tiptoed over to the doctor. The stricken father was still lying across the bed, and his loud lamentations sank into inarticulate moaning.

"Hadn't we better get him away?" asked the young man below his breath.

The doctor shook his head. "Impossible," he replied. "We must wait till this paroxysm exhausts itself. I have seen him so before—when his wife was drowned."

"Poor fellow!" murmured Ffrench.

"He got over it before and he will get over it again," said the doctor, "though, to be sure, he had the boy then and he has no one now. I am very fond of Mike Kearney. He has a noble heart, but at times like these he appears at his worst. Civilization and education came to him rather late in life, I fancy, and when such a grief stirs him the depths of his nature come to the surface—the nature of a barbarian, almost of an animal."

Again the powerful voice rose in wild and purposeless lamentation.

"All I had—God help me—all the life that was left me, an' he lyin' there like a log. What have I done that the like should come to me? Now it may go, but divil a prayer will I ever say; for what have I to pray for? Divil resave the kind word or kind thought will I ever give to anyone. The whole world may go to hell for me."

He rose from the bed and drew himself up to his full height. His face was very pale, and every feature was working with emotion. He seemed to have aged ten years in the few days that had elapsed since Gerald met him.

The doctor came to his side. "Mr. Kearney," he said, "you had better go home and take a little rest. I will walk down to the house with you."

"Home!" thundered Kearney; "what sort of a home have I? Why should I go to the house when it's here me little Jimmy is lyin' an' a stranger's brat below there in his place? Ay, but I will go; she killed him—it's herself brought the death to him. Begorra, I will go home, if it's only to throw Jimmy's murderer out of it."

He stepped to the bedside and bent over the child's form. "Good-by to ye, Jimmy, me darlint," he whispered in a tone of infinite tenderness, "though it's little use kissin' cowl'd clay. Come,

boys ; I'm goin' home," he added, turning from the bed.

A woman had been hired to act as nurse during the boy's illness. Terrified by Kearney's extravagant grief, she had been cowering in a corner of the room. She now came forward, as the men left the place, and busied herself in bestowing the last attentions that little Jimmy would ever need at human hands.

Through the dim aisles of the redwood forest, over the soft, thick carpet of withered pine-needles, under the giant branches murmuring their eternal monotone, the three men passed to the lonely house by the tide-water. Kearney was a little in advance, tossing his arms, shaking his head, gesticulating wildly, and muttering a broken jargon, half English, half Irish, that mingled discordantly with the rustle of the passionless pines. Gerald thought that grief had crazed the poor fellow, but suddenly he turned and addressed the young man, rationally enough, though in an unexpected manner.

"Mr. Ffrench, I liked ye the first time I seen ye, an' I like ye yet, but ye see for yerself that ye bro't no luck to me. 'Twas the first day ye come here that Norway chap fell under the log—the only man ever I lost in five and twenty years' lumberin',

an' nothin's gone right with me since. It's all led up to one p'int, an' that is——" His voice broke, but after a moment's pause he went on, controlling himself with a mighty effort :

"I'll ax ye to go home, Mr. Ffrench—off down the coast where ye belong, or out o' Tacara anyhow. In ten years' time, if I live that long, I'd like to see ye ag'in ; but now I can't bear to look on your face."

"Whatever you like, Mr. Kearney," answered Gerald. "I had hoped to stay here and perhaps be of use to you in the first days of your trouble, in return for all your kindness to me, but if my presence is painful to you——"

"Ye'd betther go, ye'd betther go," said Kearney, huskily. "Ye'll be goin' to Eureka to-day, doctor, I suppose ; ye've done yer d——" He checked himself. "There's nothin' more for ye to do here, an' ye'll take the young man wid ye."

They had just emerged from the shades of the great trees and were entering the clearing in which the house stood. Kearney was a little in advance, when Gerald saw him abruptly stop and cover his face with his hands. Little Inga was running from the door to meet them, and she went straight to the father with a loving inquiry for Jimmy.

"Take her away, take her away," he muttered

hoarsely ; "don't let me see her." Then he faced round on the child, who shrank back, trembling at his white face and blazing eyes. And then with uplifted hand he cursed her.

"For shame, Mr. Kearney, for shame !" cried Dr. Granby, springing forward. "The little girl is not to blame."

"Who said she was ?" said Kearney. "I wish she had done it a purpose, an' I'd 'a' had one moment's happiness while I was tearin' her to pieces. But out she goes—the home she's brought sorrow to is no place for her ; out she goes. The world's big an' broad outside o' Tacara."

Astounded at such words from lips that had never yet breathed aught for her but kindness, Inga crouched on the ground at the old man's feet. As was her way in trouble, she had flung the little apron over her head and was weeping, as her heaving shoulders testified, but weeping silently. Gerald stepped forward.

"Mr. Kearney," he said, "when I saw how you took that poor orphan from her dead father's side, how you comforted her and made her future your care, I thought I had never seen so noble a deed so kindly and graciously done. But now, sir, if you cast her off and break her little heart with your

cruelty, I don't care who you are, I don't care what your grief may be—you are a brute."

Moved by the child's piteous figure, Gerald spoke hotly, without weighing his words or taking much thought of their consequences. As he ceased speaking he drew back a step, for Kearney's eye and manner were threatening, and the journalist looked for an immediate assault. But the issue was otherwise.

"Who's axin' to hurt the child? Take her away, do what ye choose wid her, but ye might as well ax me to stare at the sun at noonday as bear the sight o' her. I can't do it. She hurts me eyes, she hurts me heart. I'll tell ye what, Mr. Ffrench," and Kearney came to his side with eager step and an almost fawning manner—"can't ye take her back to Frisco wid ye? Oh, don't think of the expense—I'll bear that, I'll provide for her for life, only don't ax me to see her. Take her wid ye. Sure there must be schools or the like down the coast where they'll take childher if they're well ped for it. There is for boys, anyhow, for I had one in me mind for Jimmy—God help me, for Jimmy;" and the strong man fairly broke down, and covering his face with his hands, sobbed aloud.

"Don't interfere with him, don't speak to him,"

said Dr. Granby ; " that'll do him more good than anything else. You go into the house and get your belongings together while I go round for the wagon. We'll start for Eureka at once ; and of course you'll take the child, as he says."

" I don't know," murmured Gerald, helplessly. " Such a charge is altogether out of my line."

" You will take her to San Francisco and put her at a good school. There your responsibility ends, for Kearney will certainly be as good as his word, and provide for her well."

Before Ffrench could answer, Inga had come to his side and slipped her little hand into his. The child had the faculty of making friends in her loneliness ; and Gerald, with a puzzled sense of unfitness, accepted the trust.

Kearney was lying on the ground, face downward, his whole frame shaken by emotion. He seemed to be utterly regardless of what was passing ; but as Gerald led the little waif toward the house, he raised his head. " Ye needn't be afeard, Mr. Ffrench," he said. " I'll do all that I said, an' I'll write to me agent in Frisco to settle it all." Then turning to Inga, who had shrunk trembling to Ffrench's side at the first sound of Mr. Kearney's voice, he added : " Don't be afeard, you either,

little girl. I've no hard feelings left for ye at all, at all ; only, God forgive ye, ye've broken me heart."

These were the last words Gerald heard him speak. When the sound of wheels announced the departure, Kearney raised his head for a moment and waved his hand in farewell ; then he let his face sink on the ground again and lay as still as if sleeping. The shadows of the redwoods were growing longer as the sun sank toward the west, but the house was still clothed in the brightness of the autumn afternoon.

"He'll be better so," the doctor said as he urged the team up the steep track. "An hour's sleep, let him get it how or where he can, will be worth much to his tired and tortured brain."

Gerald looked back as the wagon reached a turn in the road. The house was still visible, and the long, dark shadow of the redwood forest had crept closer to the prostrate man. The doctor stood up and looked back.

"He's certainly asleep," he observed. "When the sun leaves him he'll wake because of the cold."

Poor Kearney ! He would awake in time to see the shadow on his home.

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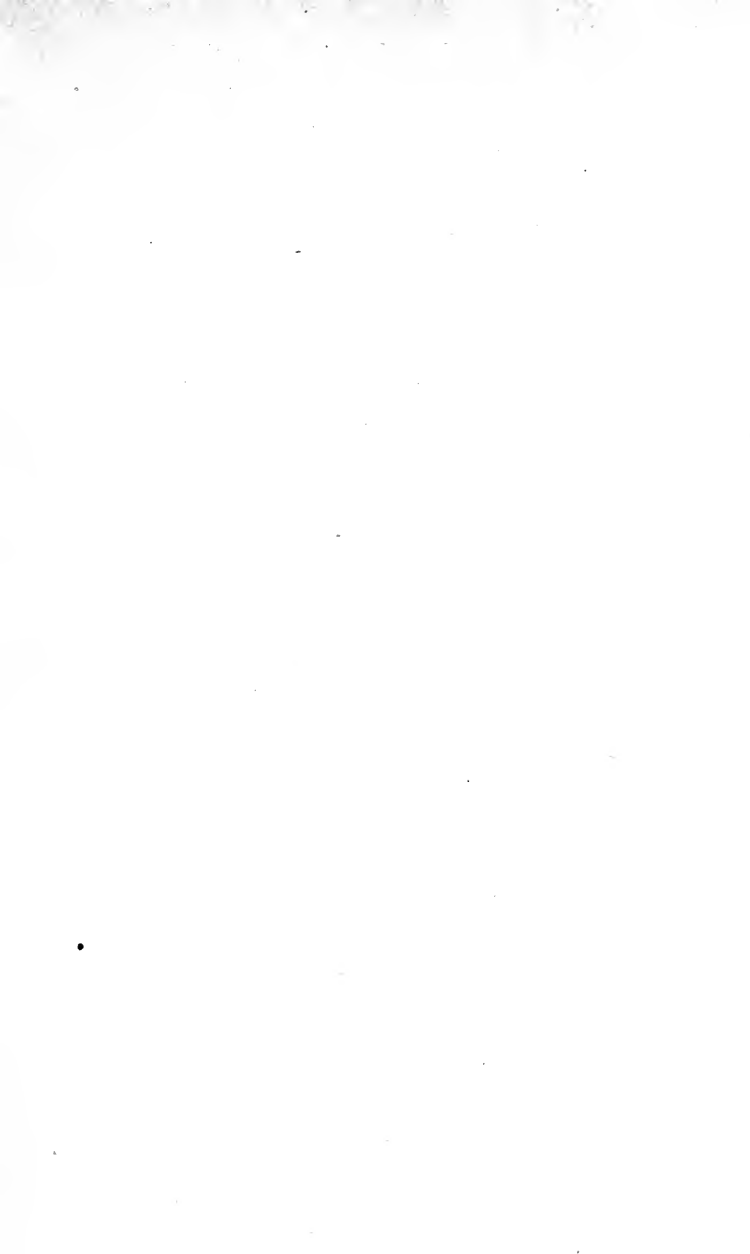
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